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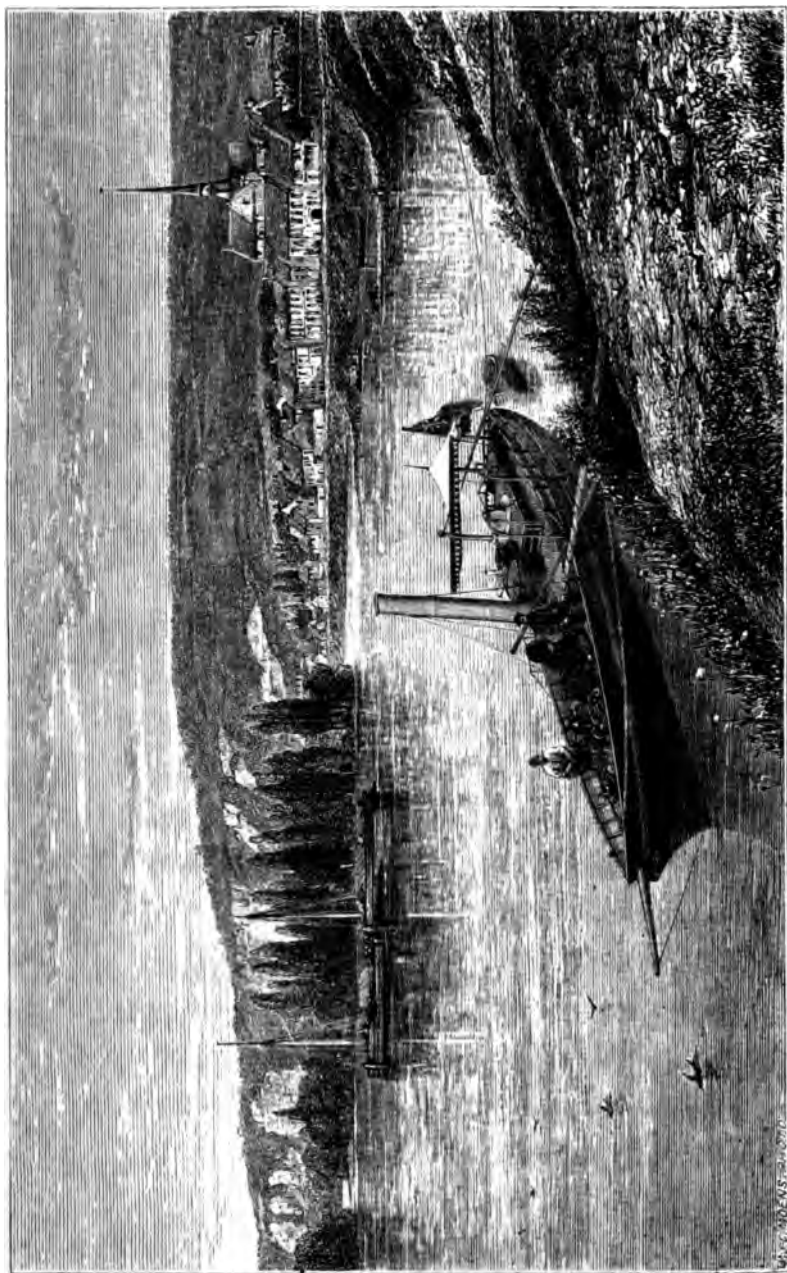
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THROUGH FRANCE AND BELGIUM,

BY RIVER AND CANAL

IN THE STEAM YACHT 'YTENE.'



THE YACHT VESSELS AT ANDELAS



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THROUGH
FRANCE AND BELGIUM,
BY RIVER AND CANAL,
IN THE STEAM YACHT 'YTENE.'

BY

W. J. C. MOENS, R.V.Y.C.

AUTHOR OF 'ENGLISH TRAVELLERS AND ITALIAN BRIGANDS.'



CHÂTEAU GAILLARD, FROM THE RIVER.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS.
13 GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1876.



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THE VOYAGE
OF
THE STEAM-YACHT 'YTENE,' R.V.Y.C.
THROUGH FRANCE AND BELGIUM,
BY RIVER AND CANAL,
IS
Dedicated
TO
THE MOST HONOURABLE
THE MARQUIS OF AILSA, R.Y.S.



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THROUGH FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

CHAPTER I.

CONSULTATION AT FOWEY—REGATTAS AT TORQUAY AND DARTMOUTH—IDEA OF A YACHTING SKIPPER—DIFFICULTIES OF INLAND NAVIGATION—PROCEED TO THE SOLENT—PREPARATIONS FOR OUR EXPEDITION—A FAITHFUL HUSBAND—A NEW MODE OF TRAVEL—THE 'YTENE' AND HER CREW.

AUGUST, 1875, was nearly gone, and the weather was threatening, having been blustering and wet the greater part of the Summer, when we held a consultation at the charming port of Fowey, whether we should go with our little steamer further westward, return to the Torquay and Dartmouth regattas, or

remain where we were, enjoying the kind hospitality we met with there, spending our days steaming about, now and then having the excitement of hauling up the trawl-net after towing it an hour or so, while we lazily feasted our eyes on the glories of the Cornish coast.

The Fates decided the question for us, for one morning a large schooner yacht, belonging to a friend, made its appearance, and it was soon settled that we should go eastward in company to Torquay. A week later, the sailing matches of the two rival harbours were events of the past, with the noisy racket that is now, alas, considered by the townspeople as indispensable for their own enjoyment, and that of the hundred and thirty odd yachts that generally frequent these regattas.

At Dartmouth, the owner of another steamer of light draft paid us a visit, telling me of his idea to go, if possible, through France by river and canal to Marseilles, and to discuss generally the internal navigation of that country. In 1869, I had ascended the Rhine to Strasbourg, and traversed France by Bar-le-Duc, Nancy

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Châlons, Paris, and Rouen to Havre, in the 'Cicada,' a steamer drawing four feet two inches.

The splendid navigation of France allows ample length and beam for a vessel making use of it, but in most cases limits the draft to 1.50 metres, equal to about five feet, and from this, four to six inches should be deducted to enable one to pass easily. The well-chosen books the owner of the 'Bull-dog' showed me, raised once more my desire to visit these quiet waters, far from the anxieties connected with our open coasts, but requiring a caution, perseverance and care that I fear few of the race of yachting skippers would like to give; for, in my journey just referred to, I passed nearly three hundred locks and five tunnels, to say nothing of the innumerable barges of enormous size, carrying from two hundred to two hundred and seventy tons of cargo, drawn by men and horses, besides long rafts of timber going from the Rhine to Paris. These craft, though bound by the police rules to give way to a vessel of a superior class, require judgment and good-humour, and a slight error, or any signs of ill-temper,

4 *Through France and Belgium.*

might easily cause accidents, which, to say the least, would soon spoil a journey taken for pleasure.

Our minds were soon made up to go to Paris, and explore the north of France and Belgium; so on the 28th August, we steamed to the Solent to lay in a store of provisions, ship light masts that we could take down and put up easily, and fill our bunkers with as much coal as we could stow, besides bags full on the deck to burn on the passage over to Havre. Apparently impossible work was got through between Monday morning and Wednesday afternoon. All the sand and mud, that will collect in the bottom of the boiler, had to be cleaned out of it, which should always be done previous to expeditions of this kind; for in canals the mud, of which the bottom generally consists, is apt to get drawn in, more or less, with the feed water, and it is prudent to have the boiler clean to start with.

Fisher, who had charge of the engineering department, wanted to go and say good-bye to his wife at Southampton, as soon as his part in our preparations was completed; so I had

to take charge of the engines, and one of the men acted as stoker, for the run of twenty miles there to pick up the faithful husband. I put A—— on board the mail-boat, as she preferred that conveyance to our little vessel of forty-five tons, for the passage across to Havre, and arranged to make signals at night should the two vessels sight each other.

Before commencing our voyage, the reader may naturally wish to know why he should be asked to read the erratic wanderings of a little yacht, and why he should be expected to take any interest in it or its owners; and why I should take the trouble to bring our Autumn's cruise before the eyes of the public, and subject myself to all those criticisms that are so lavishly made on amateur authors.

My excuse and apology are soon made; it is for the enjoyment and pleasure of others that I throw open, in these pages, a new mode of travel, whereby a party may, by the aid of steam, luxuriously pass through a great part of Europe, carrying their hotels with them, and enjoying most of the pleasures of yachting with-

out, to many of them, the worst of all maladies, sea-sickness; to say nothing of the awful fears that the slightest occurrence raises in the minds of many of our lady yachters. It will be evident at once to the minds of all that it is a new sensation to be moored opposite the Tuileries Gardens, or under the shade of St. Catherine at Brussels, in the very heart of those charming cities. So taking for granted that the indulgence of my readers has been accorded me, I will proceed to describe our floating home on this occasion, with such an account of its inmates as will make the narrative easy to follow.

The 'Ytene' is seventy-two and a half feet long over all, eleven feet three inches beam, drawing four feet eight inches water (1.42 metres), with engines of twenty horse-power nominal, constructed specially for speed, with a boiler of sufficient power and strength to obtain three hundred revolutions a minute, and giving a speed of fourteen knots, or sixteen and a half statute miles an hour, if required. In the shallow and narrow water of the canals, this speed is impossible, for the vessel drives the water before her, or drags it after and underneath her, caus-

ing such opposing currents that I often wished Mr. Froude was on board to see pieces of wood and leaves hurried by the wash along the banks at nearly the same pace the vessel was moving at, and to notice the rising and falling of the water in the canal, occasioned by the displacement of fifteen to twenty per cent of its volume. The usual consumption of one to one and a half hundredweight at sea was reduced in fresh water, and steaming at a lower speed, to about seventy-five pounds an hour; so that the coals the bunkers would hold, viz. three tons, with one ton more in the stoke-hole, enabled us to get along without the nuisance of coaling often, though, if required, it is possible to buy coal at moderate prices nearly everywhere.

Our three masts and bowsprit would easily strike when occasion demanded, and the funnel would lower level with the deck. This latter was seldom requisite, for the lowest bridges one meets with are 3.25 metres (a metre being one yard three and a half inches), though, of course, it was constantly necessary to lower it partially, which was done with tackle specially arranged. For the further guidance

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of those turning the bows of their vessels inland, I may state that nearly all the locks are over one hundred feet long, with a width of more than sixteen feet.

The crew of the 'Ytene' was composed of myself as captain and engineer in chief; Fisher, engineer and stoker; Miller, the mate, who also attended to all the duties in the cabin; and Allen, a sailor lad who cooked and did what he was told.

I was able to combine, in Fisher, the duties of engineer and stoker, as the steam and starting gear were connected with handles by the helm, so that I had entire control of the engines, while I directed the course of the vessel. This obviated all necessity for the cries of "go ahead," "stop her," "ease her," &c., which are so distressing to hear on board a yacht; and, besides this, it saves all chance of the many accidents that must happen in narrow and crowded waters through mistake, or the slightest delay in carrying out a quick order; for the crushing weight of a French barge, with two hundred and seventy tons of coals in her, requires a certain amount of respect for its power of inflicting damage; but I must say that no-

where can more careful, respectful, law-abiding people be found than those in charge of these barges. At all times a civil word, pleasantly spoken in French, will meet with the greatest attention.





CHAPTER II.

HAYE—THE HARBOUR—THE PILOT—DANGEROUS FLOOD-TIDE
—SANDBANKS IN THE SEINE—CHATEAU DE TANCARVILLE—
QUILLEBEUF—LA BARRE—DUCLAIR—HOUSES CUT IN THE
ROCK—DEUX RAVISSANTS PETITS CHIENS—ROUEN AND ITS
SCENERY—VANDALISM—FRENCH MADEIRA.



IT was 11 o'clock, p.m., when we got away from Southampton, and very dark. I was rather loath to give consent to towing a large sail-boat belonging to some neighbouring coast-guardsmen, friends of my man Miller, who had recently been in the same service. Good-nature prevailed for a time, but near Calshot Castle this boat was cast off, and we steamed slowly to the Nab, meeting a cruel spring tide. Here we had the misfortune to get

a hot bearing from an oil-cup being cracked, which delayed us much all the passage across to the French coast. At 2.30 a.m., the mail-boat overtook us, when we exchanged the signals agreed on, and A—— was called up from below to see the lights of the little yacht.

It was a fine night, which made up a little for the hot bearing; but this caused us to lose our tide at Havre, where we arrived about midday, meeting again the strong ebb tide running out of the river Seine. It was too late to get into the basin, and as at low water the outer harbour is all but dry, and receives all the sewage of the town, I do not know, nor can I imagine, a more pestilential place than this part of the harbour is at low tide in hot weather, with the bubbles rising out of the black mud in which you ground. As soon as the water allowed, I went outside the harbour, having gone through the formalities requisite at a foreign port.

We had to start early next morning to take the flood tide over the dangerous sandbanks which obstruct the entrance of the Seine; so I got a pilot, by name Trout, whose turn it was, who went along

the quay bemoaning his luck, and continuing to repeat "Un vaisseau d'onze tonneaux—un vaisseau d'onze tonneaux;" as one pays pilotage according to tonnage, and the deductions of boiler, bunker, and engine-room space brought me down to eleven tons net register. His face was piteous to see, and he never recovered his serenity till I gave him an extra five francs out of very compassion.

At 7 a.m., we embarked in our dingy, and our foreign trip, just begun, seemed likely to come to a fatal end, for the quick run of the flood tide across the east pier head, with the wind across it, raised such an awkward sea that it was with the greatest difficulty we got through it. The tops of two seas fell over the quarter of the boat, wetting us through, and making us feel most uncomfortable until we got into smoother water. Monsieur Trout all the time held on to the gunwails of the boat with each hand. It is a very dangerous place, and great care should be taken if it is necessary to go through the set of the tide in a small boat, and another time I made my mind up to steam in, and not endanger life in such a manner. To this

day, I do not know how we got through it.

Once past the worst place, we were soon on board, and hoisting up the boat were speedily under weigh. At 8.4 our little craft was gaily steaming across the wide waters that form the mouth of the Seine, which is full of most dangerous sandbanks, the channels of which are constantly changing, so much so as to require the services of a steamer and staff of men to mark out the navigable route after every spring tide. This is done with poles which have small red flags attached to them. It would not be high water at Havre till eleven o'clock, so that we had a fair tide up to Rouen, where the waters would flow until three, there being a difference of four hours between the two places. Leaving a bank called "les ratières" on our starboard hand, we steamed close to the town of Honfleur, and soon passed Fatouville with its lighthouse, which guides vessels to sea from the port of Havre, by keeping it in one with the light at the end of the mole.

We kept close along the south bank of the river, which here has high banks covered with

poplars, with little villages scattered here and there nestling among the trees, making rapid progress with the strong tide, which carries the sand with it to such a degree that the water is the colour of pea-soup, not at all conducive to the well-doing of the boiler, should it be short of steam-room.

The château at Tancarville on our left now came in view, an old stronghold of the time of the Dukes of Normandy. We regretted much that the nature of the navigation here did not allow us to stop and spend an hour in investigating the ruins of the old castle and the charming woods behind it.

At Quillebœuf the river suddenly contracts to three quarters of a mile wide, having been just below the point three miles from side to side. This sudden contraction causes the spring tide, when impelled by a strong wind, to come in with such force over the sands that it forms a *bore*, called in French *La Barre*. This tidal wave, from two to five feet high, rushes up the river from bank to bank, and woe betide any vessel that is not prepared for it. The right thing to

do is, with anchor arip and chain short, to await the wave with the head of the vessel turned towards it, and then when the bore has gone by to pay out chain and bring up. Great damage is done at times at the quay at Quillebœuf, but this is only experienced at the equinoxes, when the wave is highest.

Villequier, the station for the sea pilots on the left bank, we reached at 11.15., having done the forty-five miles, with the tide, in two hours and a half. Here we landed Monsieur Trout, making him happy with an extra fee, and another pilot came off in a boat; but I declined his services, as, from previous experience, I felt competent to take the 'Ytene' up to Rouen myself. Between Caudebec and Le Trait the sandbanks are on each side of the river, marked on the right bank with poles and red flags, with a red light at night on the first one, white buoys and lights on the port hand. Maleraye, with its poplars, is passed on the right bank, and further on are high chalk cliffs, where ballast is quarried. This soft chalk is valued at Newcastle for making soda. A long reach, nearly straight, brings us to Duclair on the left side, where

is a large steam ferry. Here, and at all important stations, there is a tall white flag-staff, with cross-trees and gaff, which flies flags to show the depth and state of the tide. This part of the river is very pretty, and we noticed houses cut out of the white rock. Villas are to be seen in quantities, some of them not larger than dolls' houses; the white cliffs contrast well with the verdant hanging woods, and the many orchards form a pleasing picture. This is a favourite village of the townspeople of Rouen, and is only five miles and a half distant by road. Just past Duclair, there is a long, narrow wooded island, which, with the white buoy at the head of it, we leave on our left hand.

At two o'clock we passed Bouille on the right, which, with its white cliffs, large caves, and pretty villas, formed a most pleasant picture; here white stone is quarried for building purposes. In this part of the Seine are several islands, which we leave all on our right; and we met a passenger steamer calling at the dummies, which are formed of the vessels of the passengers' great-grand-fathers. The tall chimneys of the many factories

now tell us that we are approaching Rouen, and the high towers and spires of the Cathedral and other churches speedily come in view, the centre spire of the former, four hundred and eighty-two feet high, and made of iron, being a prominent object, and a most unsightly one. We are soon between the numerous ships that line the quays on each side of the river, and we look round for an English vessel laden with coal to make fast to, with the double object of replenishing our bunkers, and of not having the trouble to attend to our warps on the rise and fall of the tide. In turning round to bring up, we found the tide still making up very strongly; and we had to turn sharply round to avoid being swept under the Suspension Bridge. In doing so, we nearly frightened the wits out of two *douaniers*, who were in their boat, lazily hanging on to a small buoy, and half asleep.

We were soon made fast to the 'Paragon,' hailing from Shields, with whose men, Fisher, who always delights in new acquaintances, soon made

friends, he never being thoroughly happy without some one to listen to his numerous yarns and foreign experiences. Our first care was to go ashore, and give a run to our two little pets, Titus and Lill, the smallest but not least important of the ship's company. These were two black and tan toy terriers, and best described in the language of the French journalist, as "les deux plus ravissants petits chiens que l'on puisse voir."

It is always a great thing, when on a river, not to bring up too close to a town, alongside a quay, for here you are not only smothered with dust, but driven to distraction with the incessant talk and noise of dozens of natives close to you, to whom the sight of an English yacht is a novelty of a rare order; and, besides avoiding these nuisances, the best view of the quaint architecture of the houses and churches is obtained at a little distance. The distance from Havre to Rouen is a hundred and twenty-six kilometres, equal to eighty miles. The scenery is so diversified and pretty that it will repay the owners of yachts of a moderate size to

come up as far as Rouen and see it. Rouen itself is one of the most charming towns in France, and most prettily situated. Its history and buildings are most interesting, and its streets are full of life and commerce. The general view from the river below it is most magnificent. You have the broad Seine with its grand suspension and stone bridges crossing it, the wooded island seen beneath the arches, the shipping and the bustling life on the broad quays. Behind the town and its churches there is a fine range of hills, that run now on one and now on the other side of the river, all the way up to Paris. Beyond the town is Mont St. Catherine, and farther off you see the church of Notre Dame de Bon Secours on another hill. From either of these places, which are within the reach of a walk, the whole of Rouen, with the river and its scenery, is spread out below in a glorious panoramic view.

It would never do in these pages to make a feeble attempt to emulate Murray in giving any account of what may be seen, or even what we saw, in the way of sight-seeing. Yachting,

of the kind now described has the advantage of not being cut off from the enjoyment of flitting from one old town to another, and feasting one's eyes on the glories of the architecture of the middle ages, to say nothing of the chef-d'œuvres of the painters who followed a little later. We always made a point of going to the local museums. The one at Rouen has a fine collection of French *faïence*. The English amateur is sadly at fault here, not seeing Bristol, Chelsea, Derby china, but that of French towns, the marks and appearance of which, with the exception of Sèvres, he is a stranger to; but this ware is much valued, and a high price is asked for it.

Rouen of the present day is not the Rouen of thirty years ago. The rage for improvements of all kinds has, at least in most of the leading streets, caused the quaint old houses to disappear, and a wide boulevard from each end of the wide quai runs right round the city; but the Rue de la Grosse Horloge is as quaint as ever, with the huge and antiquated clock right over the centre of it. There is one kind of restoration

still much needed, and a deep groan is drawn from my inward heart when I see the remains of some old church, perhaps of Norman, perhaps of Gothic architecture, converted into a warehouse, or even brewery, and perchance hear the observation, "Mais que voulez-vous, Monsieur, ce sont des événements qu'on ne peut ni prévoir ni prévenir, voilà ce que c'est." It is said that during the Revolution nearly a dozen parish churches were converted into warehouses.

There is one *commerce* at Rouen which shows the enterprise of our neighbours, and which gives a good idea of the gullibility of the Britisher and American. One day, while waiting for our boat, rowing across the river to take us on board, I asked the captain of a thousand-ton English vessel that was moored alongside the quay, what cargo he was going to take on board. To my great amusement, he said in the quietest way, "*Madeira wine.*"

"Ah," I replied to him, "they make a great deal here."

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“Yes, Sir,” said he, in return. “*French Madeira.*”

The spirit distilled from the sugar-beet, sweetened and bedevilled, forms the chief ingredient of this *choice* wine.





CHAPTER III.

NAVIGATION OF THE SEINE—ROUSILLEN, THE PILOT—THE
LAISSEZ-PASSEZ—ST. OISSEL—ISLANDS IN THE SEINE—EL-
BŒUF—ANNUAL FAIR—ENORMOUS LOCK—PATIENT FISHER-
MAN—THE SUBMERGED CHAIN—ABBAY OF BON PORT—PONT
DE L'ARCHE—CÔTE DES DEUX AMANTS—CHALK HILLS—PRICE
OF PROVISIONS.

SATURDAY, the 4th September, was devoted to finding out a pilot to take us up to Paris, for though the River Seine is deep in places, a man who well knows the channel is requisite; as perhaps only two arches, out of a dozen of which a bridge consists, are deep enough to pass under and since the war, when so many were demolished, this it still more the case. The

bottom of the river is very peculiar, in many places there being a great number of sharply-pointed rocks standing up, the earth round which has been washed away by the water. When descending the Seine in the "Cicada," in 1869, an incompetent pilot ran her right on to one, although we actually found twenty feet of water all round us, and it required many tugs from two steamers that were passing to get us off our awkward position, which was fortunately done without any damage, the keel having happened to take the point of the rock.

The pilot we now engaged was by name Rousillen, *alias* Camut, who was formerly chief pilot on the river, but has now retired, and only takes charge of yachts. His fee is a hundred francs, which is twenty-five francs more than usually charged by the pilots who take charge of the barges and other vessels. Rousillen is a quiet, pleasant, and obliging man, who knows every inch of the river, and will, if pressed, devote a week to the journey which can be done in two or three days, for it is unsatisfactory driving on

too fast, and not stopping to look around a little, and enjoy the scenery of the river. Rousillen keeps a wine-shop and billiard-table, and may be found at No. 20, Quai de Paris.

At No. 25, on the same quay, is the bureau of Monsieur Petitclerk, the receiver of the navigation dues, to whom it is necessary to pay a visit, in order to obtain a *laissez passez*. This should be always yellow in France, the colour denoting that the vessel is empty and without cargo. The large sum of ten centimes, equal to one penny, is the charge, and this only for the stamp, for empty vessels are allowed to go on the canals and rivers free of charge, they being supposed to pay on the return voyage loaded. Care must be taken never to be without one of these papers when about to land, for you are sure to be stopped at the first lock, and needless delay is the consequence. Steamers are vessels of the first class, and, according to the rules and regulations, they take precedence of all others in passing the many locks and bridges. This is a point of great importance, and has often to be insisted on in crowded canals.

On Sunday morning there is a curious open air market held in the Place Sever, where all sorts of second-hand things are sold, many of them extraordinary articles that look perfectly valueless, but which a marine-store dealer will give something for. There are also many stalls of live birds, of which the French are very fond.

Before making a start on the Monday, we filled our bunkers up with one ton and a half of Hartley steam-coal, from our friend the 'Paragon,' for which Messrs. E. and A. Duquesne, 21, Rue Lemire, St. Severs, charged us thirty-seven francs a ton. At 2.35 p.m., we got off with sixty pounds of steam, and I put the helm into Rousillen's hands, leaving myself free to take notes and thoroughly enjoy the scenery, which can hardly be done when the mind is burdened with the responsibility of having the vessel in charge.

We soon left behind us the fine Suspension Bridge, the stone bridge that passes over the end of the island which is in the middle of the river, and higher up the railway bridge of eight arches, each a hundred and thirty-one feet span. There the river is wider, and there is a long line

of islands in it. On the left side are large oil-works under Mount St. Catherine, then the hill on which is the Church of Bon Secours that we had walked up to on Sunday afternoon. Along these heights may still be seen the remains of the earth-works for the batteries which were intended to keep the Germans out of Rouen during the war ; but they unexpectedly came from the other side of the river in great force, and entered the town over the bridges without any fighting. At this part of the river the rise of the tide is six feet, and after three or four islands are passed, the others are all left on the port hand.

We reached St. Oissel at 3.30. There is very little water on the left side, on which the town is situated. On the other side is a weir for catching fish. Haymaking was going on on the right bank. The dry grass is twisted up in small bundles and packed away, which recalled to mind some curious experiences of Italian mountain life in 1865. The next island is left on the right hand, after which we passed over a long stretch of uninteresting water. At Bedaune spurs of the chalk hills, of dazzling whiteness,

and the ends of which are precipitous, run to the river, with cultivated valleys between them. These pyramidal cliffs, adorned with poplar and other trees mingled together, form most pleasing views; and under the cliffs there are many fruit trees growing among the verdant grass.

On the other side of the river there is a small village. Here we passed an old château that had no less than fifteen windows in a row, and twelve attic windows above.

We now met the 'Providence of Calais,' a paddle steamer, looking very bright with red paint, and going very sedately and slowly. The rule of the road is the same as in England. As a matter of course, off went a flight of caps, and greetings were exchanged. Just below the railway bridge of Orival it was necessary to go very slowly, as the river is shallow, and the tide had hardly come up. Orival, which joins Elbœuf, is a long straggling town between the chalk cliffs and river. At Elbœuf I counted forty chimney-stacks of factories, many of which make cloth; and there are also large dyeing works, which have greatly increased in number

here since the war, as indeed they have in all parts of France, and nothing can exceed the apparent prosperity, the signs of which are seen everywhere. A busy and merry scene was presented to us as we passed, this being the time of the annual fair, which was in full play with its circus and booths. The spectacle had apparently irresistible attractions to the bargemen, for their vessels were lying all across the river, and the empty washing-boat establishments showed that there was not much business going on. Yesterday afternoon all Rouen was there. The passenger boat was just getting ready to start, with its full complement. At 4.40 we arrived at the first lock just above the town of Elbœuf. The same lock-keeper was there that had charge in 1869, when we were detained here for six hours, while divers filled a hole at the bottom of the lock with bags of hydraulic cement. There is from six to seven hours difference of tide between the lock and Havre, ninety miles distant, and at the lock the water rises at high tide from two to three feet.

The 'Ytene' was soon moored on the right

hand side of the enormous lock, the beautifully constructed stone sides of which appeared more like quays than the walls of a lock, and the lock itself was like a floating basin, being over four hundred feet long, and forty wide. The wall we were alongside was ten feet thick. I stepped out to look around, while the gates were being shut and the sluices opened. The inevitable fisherman was, of course, there, patiently waiting for the tug of a captured carp, of which he might catch one in a moon. The water was very deep, and the float of his line carefully plumbed for about fifteen feet. I asked him whether it was worth while fishing when so little sport could be expected, and his answer was, "*Il faut que je m'amuse.*"

It was an hour before we saw the upper gate open, and we passed on our way. We found the country above very flat, with a village on each side of the river. Here one of the peculiar steam-tugs, with ten barges attached to her, met us, making use of the submerged chain, which the action of the engine raises and grips by taking three turns round a drum. This

powerful and ready system I propose to describe more at length by and by.

On the right bank, a little way from the river, are the remains of the Abbey of Bon Port, built by Richard Cœur de Lion in 1190, to mark the place where he landed after his narrow escape from drowning, when he plunged into the river in his excitement after a stag closely pursued. The refectory, which alone is now standing, is very well preserved, and forms a part of farm buildings. Here, in the peaty banks of the river, may be seen the stems and roots of the trees that once formed part of a dense forest in ages long past.

Pont de l'Arche, consisting of ten fine arches, is soon left behind. The church of the town is very quaint, with the walls of the nave rising high above the high pitched roof of the aisles. The summit is crowned with a small steeple, and the aisles and the upper walls of the nave have very high and narrow pointed windows. The effect of the sun setting behind the town and bridge was very striking, all

objects being gilded by its departing rays. At Le Manois, lovers of old fashioned houses would be delighted to see the first house of this village, with its gabled roofs and projecting dormer windows. The lock ahead was over ten miles from the last, so Fisher and Allen thought it a good subject for a bet of a bottle of wine, whether the distance would be done in an hour, shrewdly guessing that in any case it would come out of my pocket. The time, when taken at Lock des Poses, showed that we had done it in fifty-eight minutes, not a bad pace against the current and towing our boat astern. Another half-hour and we were on the reach above ; we moored alongside the bank for the night, the pilot going to sleep at the house of his sister, who lived near.

The next morning a friend came with him, who presented us with a quantity of fine pears, and asked if we would allow him to have a passage for a few miles up the river. His magnificent velvet trousers were a treat to see, a striking comparison with his blue blouse ; the former exciting the especial admiration of Fisher, who wished for a similar pair to perform his

duties of stoking and cleaning the engines in. There was a great discussion between Rousillen and our passenger as to the number of Communes to be seen from the Hill of the Two Lovers, and they went over the number on the tips of their fingers. Rousillen lost the day, his friend proving that there were sixty-five, which he counted up, besides, as he said, the sea at Havre.

The *Côtes des Deux Amants* is the scene of the lay of Mary of France. The young lover was to marry the mistress of his heart, a king's daughter, provided he could carry her to the top of the hill without stopping to rest. He fell dead under his precious burden, exhausted with the exertion, just as he reached the summit; at which the king's daughter died of a broken heart, and was buried in the same grave with him. The hard-hearted father, who had caused this catastrophe by imposing such cruel conditions, struck with remorse, founded a convent on the spot where it occurred.

There are several islands in this part of the river, and formerly the Canal des Poses was used to avoid the shallows, but since the rectifica-

tion of the river it has been disused. The Pont d'Andé was destroyed by the Germans one morning during the war, and I was told that they made no use of the river to carry stores, &c.

St. Pierre was passed on the right, and Andé on the left; the railway running on the former side between the sloping hills and the river. It is a great corn country here, and we learnt that notwithstanding the wet season, now happily past, there had been a magnificent harvest, which would much aid in restoring the losses caused by the war, of which few traces could be now seen in this part of France. The country was flat to Muids on the left bank, and the river so shallow that we had to reduce our speed. Four miles higher up, coming close to the water, are the chalk hills, with three curious white rounded buttresses, that must, one would think, have been artificially made, the appearance of the exposed chalk being so smooth and regular. These hills form one of the great features of the scenery of the Seine.

It was arranged that the pilot should return home to Rouen, leaving us for two days to enjoy the

beauties of Les Andelys, which we reached just after breakfast; and we moored above the village, under the hill with the ruins of Château Gaillard, the pet castle of Richard Cœur de Lion. This morning's journey was seventeen miles and a half, which shows that this place can be easily reached in one day from Rouen. A halt should always be made here, to examine carefully this old Norman castle, built by one so renowned in English history.

The photographic apparatus was now brought out for the first time, and some views were taken from the river bank of the castle and the vessel, that we might ascertain whether the solutions were in good order, and to take detailed views of the castle on the following day. The rest of the day was spent rowing down to an island we had passed, on which was a small farm-house, built on the site of an old house or dependence of the castle, the original walls of which surrounded the present garden. These were built of carefully cut stone, and were in perfect preservation, though over seven hundred years old.

The profusion of fruit was marvellous, the year's crop of apples, pears, plums, &c., being the greatest ever known. We bought a large basket of very sweet yellow plums for four pence, pears the same. Eggs were comparatively dear, being one penny each, which was the price everywhere. Milk was twopence a quart. Butter one shilling and eight-pence to one shilling and ten-pence per pound. Labour was two shillings and sixpence to three shillings a day; good cows twenty-five pounds each. The cows were thought much of, and they certainly were very fine, being large-framed, symmetric animals, very different from the Brittany cows that give rich milk, but all poor animals in the butcher's eyes. The value of good land here is from £60 to £70 an acre. The days of cheap food have gone by in France, now that railways and steamers have caused the eyes of those living in country places to be opened, all produce being quickly taken to great centres.

While mentioning the price of various articles of food, I may say that everything is very dear

indeed in France since the war; the custom-house and octroi duties pressing very heavily on the people. Sugar is eightpence half-penny per pound, meat tenpence to one shilling for ordinary parts, and two shilling for fillets, &c. Coffee is two and fourpence to three shillings a pound, and tea from five to six shillings. Fruit is the only thing that is cheap; but in France this is considered to form a great part of the food of the people.





CHAPTER IV.

CHATEAU GAILLARD — LE PETIT ET LE GRAND ANDELYS —
SPECIMEN OF DOMESTIC GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE—CAFÉ AU
LAIT—PHOTOGRAPHING—SAVING OF CARRIAGE—BRIDGE OF
COURCELLES AND GUILLANT—VERNON—CASSALOUSE—SUB-
DIVISION OF LAND IN FRANCE—LA ROCHE GUYON—FALL OF
WATER IN THE RIVER—CHATEAU DE ROSNY.

CHATEAU GAILLARD, not only from its situation but from its historical reminiscences, is the most interesting place in the journey up the Seine, and fortunately the modern Suspension Bridge, being above the castle, does not in any way interfere with the extensive and beautiful view of the river, as it flows towards Rouen, that

one has from the hills above. The hill can be climbed by passing through a garden, and going up a zig-zag path which leads to the castle; but the proper and more easy way is from the upper end of Le Petit Andelys, which, by an easy ascent, gains the castle, and it is entered by a small door or sally-port, up to which a flight of stone steps has been made, with iron rails for the purpose of protection.

The view from the distant windows shows the river with its many turns, till it is lost to sight in the distance, the line of chalk hills, with their white buttresses before described, running along the left bank for fifteen miles, until where the Hill of the Two Lovers slopes steeply to the water's edge; the opposite bank is flat and richly cultivated, with straight roads intersecting the fertile plain. The little town of Le Petit Andelys is in a valley between the hills, in the bottom of which runs a small stream from Le Grand Andelys, two miles off, a town which possesses a stately church and a first-rate inn, called by the name of Le Grand Cerf, well known for the fine collection of faience and other

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curiosities of ancient days. A prominent object in the little town is the hospital founded by the Duc de Penthievre, a large red building with two wings, and a large dome in the centre.

Opposite the hospital is the island mentioned before, wooded with fruit trees and willows. The river behind it is utilised as a fishery, the weir of which runs right across the arm of the stream, and below this is the old mill that ground the corn used by the possessors of the castle.

It is said that the castle was built in a year in defiance of an agreement, by Richard with the King Philippe Auguste, not to fortify Andelys. The castle is built on the spur of a hill, with a deep fosse, and a wall with towers across the upper end of the spur. The three other sides are so steep that they must have been impregnable in those days, but the upper side would have given a grand position had cannons then been in fashion.

Within this enclosure rose the Donjon, a building of vast strength, the walls being fifteen feet thick, and constructed in rather a peculiar way. They

are first straight, and then form the segment of a circle, which is continued all round. A deep fosse surrounds this Donjon, and on the upper side there is a series of caverns cut in the chalk with eight-sided supports left here and there, which may have been used for storehouses; in the most remote one a flat seat has been left, and this may have been used for a guard-house. The arches of the windows and doors are all pointed, with the exception of one small door, which is round.

The chief entrance, now inaccessible from the outside, is pointed, and nearly exactly like the west door of Boldre Church, in the New Forest. On each side of the doorway there were covered recesses, evidently intended to protect from the sun and weather the guards that would always be on duty at this place.

The outside of all the towers, &c., was faced with wrought stone, but in many parts this has fallen away, leaving the chalk rubble exposed. The well is now filled up, but was very deep. It occasioned the loss of the castle, from the destruction of all ropes available for the purpose of draw-

ing water, when David Bruce defended it in 1334, he being besieged by the troops of King Henry.

In the cool of the evening we walked up to Le Grand Andelys, and admired the fine painted glass in the church ; afterwards going to see the hotel, which is the great feature of the town, it being a most curious and well-preserved specimen of domestic Gothic architecture, built of wood. A house in the town, somewhat similar, was bought by an Englishman a few years back, who, having fallen in love with the quaintness of its appearance, transported it in pieces to this country. The furniture, china, and ornaments of the Grand Cerf were as curious as the building, the kitchen even being filled with odds and ends, and on the wall were hanging mediæval padlocks, and other bronze articles, among which was the old large key of the Château Gaillard itself, found in the ruins some years back.

The landlord of the hotel, now dead for two years, collected these things, and it is not yet decided by the trustees whether or not they are to be sold. If so, the sale will be a great opportunity

for *bric-à-brac* hunters. The widow of the landlord who now carries on the business, took great pleasure in showing us over the house, and we pitied any inmate who should be so unfortunate as to have the nightmare while sleeping in the best bed-room.

Here one still gets the *café-au-lait* in the old-fashioned style, a large bowl of coffee and milk, with a relay of warm milk in a large jug. This with bread and excellent butter, formed our supper, but we ordered dinner for the morrow, as all appearances bid fair for a good French repast.

The next day, September 9th, we spent up at the castle, photographing. It was intensely hot below, but above a nice breeze tempered the sultry air, and enabled us to spend the day in comfort, though the labour of walking about to find the right points of view, and to expose the plates, was great. Luncheon was sent up to us from the yacht below, and when I had taken six views and packed up the apparatus, we sat down and enjoyed the prospect till it was time to prepare to go to the old hotel to dinner. Advantage was taken on board to revarnish the bright work on

deck, and touch up the paint ready for our appearance at Paris.

Rousillen turned up next morning at nine o'clock, rather anxious about the state of the water, it having fallen to 1.45 metres, our draught being four feet eight inches, equal to 1.42 metres. We shifted our spare anchor and chain from aft to forward, so as to put the vessel on a more even keel, which would lessen a little the depth of water we drew aft. We started at ten o'clock, and above the bridge had another fine view of the castle, which we left with the greatest regret, having spent a most happy time there, free from the bustle and noise that one always finds in a town.

The island above is left on the port hand, the channel being very narrow and shallow. Above the islands, the hills rising from the river are very steep, and covered with juniper trees. We noticed a clever saving of carriage near here at a brick-yard. The clay above, being wetted, is slid down a shoot of wood, and made on the river-bank into bricks, which, when burnt, are loaded into barges.

A mile farther on, the railway passes alongside the

river for a short way, and then by a tunnel is carried under the hills. The channel opposite a little reedy island is close to the right bank, and is so narrow that, if two vessels are coming the reverse way, the one that ascends has to stop to allow the other to pass. Just above this place we met another steamer, towing a train of barges by means of the chain. At eleven o'clock we passed the Bridge of Courcelles and Guillant, which fell down early one morning just after it was rebuilt, on account of the cement having been bad. This ruined the architect, who, in France, is responsible for two years for the work he has overlooked; not a bad plan to make the architect responsible for the builder who scamps his work.

At a quarter past eleven we passed through the Lock de Garenne, the reach being long and uninteresting, with a row of tall poplars on the left bank. Just below Vernon is an arsenal on the right, a large ugly building. The left arch of the bridge here was destroyed during the war, but the others are left standing. The town of Vernon is on the left, and we noticed a fine old church with a round tower, which, strange to

say, is now used as a copper foundry. The fair people had moved their booths, &c., from Elbœuf on to here, and the fun was at its height. The water-guage only showed 1.40 metres, and we began to doubt whether we should be able to pass the shallows at Nantes and Meulan. Just below the high wall of the railway at Port Villez we filled our water-beakers, the water being considered very good in this part of the stream. The railway makes its appearance again close to the river, which it follows for some way. A little higher than this, a new lock and weir were being made before the war, and the works are not yet recommenced, though the new *écluse* is much needed. The large sum of five millions of francs has been expended, and the lock, gates, &c., are all made, but the weir is not half finished.

At Jeuffosse we leave the island to starboard, and go close along the other shore. Some fine reaches now bring us to Bonnières on the right bank, with a fishery on the other side, the channel being in the centre. Stones are on the left side of it, and sandbanks on the right. Farther on is Cassalouse, on the left, where the hills are

well cultivated, and the narrow strips show the extent to which the *partage* has cut up the land; what will it be in another eighty years? By this system drainage is quite prevented, from the impossibility of getting all concerned to agree. Rousillen told us that the water has been twenty feet higher than it was then. When it is eighteen feet higher, all navigation ceases on account of the arches of the bridges; when it is a certain height, all the barrages, or weirs, are removed, and then vessels and barges do not use the locks, but pass freely through an opening made for the purpose by their side. Below La Roche Guyon, on the left bank, are melancholy-looking hills cultivated with vines, with the grapes of which they make a small sour wine. Chalk cliffs begin to show again close to the water, covered with willows and poplars.

Here we saw the round tower of the château, which is the oldest part of it, three quarters of the way up the heights. It is the most striking place on the Seine, next to Château Gaillard, and was long the property of the Larochefoucaulds. It has been added to at different times, and

many parts of it are formed by being excavated in the solid chalk, the front part only being built up. This is quite the fashion here, many of the poorer people living in dwellings thus excavated, in some cases one being above the other. We could not stop to examine closely this curious place, on account of the water falling so rapidly, but all possible use was made of the glasses, and a determination was registered to make a halt at La Roche Guyon the first opportunity. We noticed that the windows, in the oldest part of the château were round, and, therefore, it must have been built before the Saucy Castle, as it was termed by Richard Cœur de Lion. Just below the château is a suspension bridge, with a very long span, the damage done to which during the war has not yet been repaired. The row of washing-women matched the castle, all being very old.

In France all the washing is done at the river side, and in good sized towns there are large floating establishments, the compartments of which are let out for a few sous a day. Just above the bridge, the London steamer 'Arion,' going to Paris, was stopped, the river having fallen too

low, as she was drawing five feet, and she had to discharge part of her cargo into barges before she could go on. It was some days after we arrived at Paris when we saw her pass by, going to the wharf from which she plies. The authorities make her take two pilots, and also put four custom-house men, douaniers, on board. This is one of the most shallow parts of the river, with large stones on the bottom, and, consequently, very dangerous. The channel is on the right of a long island in the middle of the stream.

We pass Mousseaux on the right bank, and Vittrailles on the left, without touching; and a mile below Lavecourt we found the water deeper, and less care was required. Heaps of stone may be seen on the bank that barges have discharged, to enable them to pass this bad part of the river.

Here we passed a pic-nic party, and were much amused at the studied attitude of two of them who were fishing. How we longed to see them catch a fish! It would have had a serious effect on them, I am sure. We had seen hun-

dreds of fishermen, and, during our voyage, thousands, but never once saw a fish caught. The pleasure of watching the float and inhaling the fresh air was, as they said, a sufficient result.

Rollebois, on the right, with its church with a little spire, brings us to the Château de Rosny, a large plain building of red brick and stone, with a high-pitched roof, erected by Sully in the beginning of the 17th century, on the site of the old château, where he was born. It was afterwards the favourite residence of the Duchesse de Berri, who added the chapel. The grounds extend some way along the river, and they appear to be well planted with choice trees and shrubs.

There is a telegraph wire across the water to Guernes on the left bank, where is a long strand with many washerwomen, who rejoice in donkeys to carry their washing to and from the town, which is a little way inland. At 4.55 p.m., we sight the two towers of the Cathedral of Mantes, and we pass a steamer with forges, &c., on deck, which were occupied in mending the chain used for towing. While passing her, we touched the bot-

tom with a bump, but without injury, and at five o'clock reached the town.

It was just below Mantes that, in 1869 when descending the Seine in the 'Cicada,' we ran aground from want of water in just the same place, and had to wait until water had been let through from the weir above, which gave sufficient depth to float her and a large barge past the worst places. This is done when the river is very low on certain days, of which information can be obtained.





CHAPTER V.

MANTES—THE CATHEDRAL—A LONG TUNNEL—SUNDAY AMUSEMENTS—WASHERWOMEN—POISSY—JUNCTION OF THE SEINE AND OISE — CONFLANS — VILLAS NEAR PARIS — MARKET GARDENS — ST. GERMAIN — MONT VALÉRIEN — EPINAY — ST. DENIS—GLASSWORKS—SÈVRES—ENTRANCE TO PARIS—PENNY STEAMERS.



WE brought up below the new bridge, built to replace the old one destroyed during the war. The Prussians, however, soon replaced the destroyed bridge by one made of barges. An enormous amount of useless damage might have been left undone ; but it is difficult to judge calmly in such trying times, and orders given must be carried out. After going to the post-office for

letters, we went to see the fine cathedral. The arches in the nave are very stilted, and reminded us much of those in the Cathedral at Palermo. The triforium gallery is very high, and is formed of triple arches carried right round the east end. It was well restored about twelve years ago. At this town William the Conqueror, whose horse had started at the sight of some burning houses, received the mortal injury that caused his death at Rouen, some few days afterwards.

At six o'clock we were off again, and soon a storm, that had been threatening, broke with thunder, lightning, and heavy rain, which did not last long. By 7.30, we reached the lock at Meulan, and as it was rather dark we blew our steam-whistle sharply, and a red light, the signal that the gates are open and the lock all ready, was almost immediately displayed. We were not long in passing through, and we moored for the night alongside a large barge unloading coals, that had come from Mons, where we purposed going. The men on board told us that there was a tunnel to be passed through *en route*, four miles

and a half long, not by any means a cheerful prospect. This day our journey was fifty miles. The pilot was very tired, having left Rouen early, and there was no inn near, so Miller had to give up half his berth to him. He made a great joke about Fisher's stoke-hole, which was termed the drawing-room.

The next morning, September 10th, was very wet, so we did not start till after breakfast, at 9.15. There are many fine villas here, with gay gardens, built by the Parisians, who quite appreciate the luxury of living out of town in the Summer, which is very hot in Paris. A stand was being erected for the regatta to be held next Sunday, the great day for all public amusements abroad. We were sorry for this arrangement, as we should have stood a good chance of winning a gold medal, given as a prize for steam-yachts. The washerwomen looked very droll this morning, with large umbrellas stuck into the ground to shelter them from the rain, which still continued to fall.

At 9.25 we reached Triel suspension bridge, which is only twenty miles from Paris by

railway, but over fifty by water. The church is very old, and has some good painted glass, and an altar-piece by Poussin. The island is left on the port hand. This part is considered good for fishing, some of the many anglers having no less than three rods apiece; but their luck was as usual.

A run of about five miles brings us to Poissy on the right, the church of which has two towers. This town is celebrated for its religious conference in 1561, and also for being the birth-place of St. Louis. Seventeen arches of the bridge, out of thirty-seven of which it consists, on the town side, were destroyed in the war. On this bridge there are three mills, which have their water-wheels under the arches.

Above the town, the owner of a factory there has two yachts, for which a small port is cut in the river bank; they cannot draw much water for the river is very shallow between Poissy and the lock of Denouval. At half-past eleven we left the lock behind us, the date of our passage and a signature being written on our yellow *laissez passer* here, as at the other locks. A steamer with

six barges in tow was ahead of us. We soon passed them, and a run of two and a half miles brought us to the junction with the river Oise on the left hand, with a suspension bridge over it, through which was our route for Belgium after we had visited Paris.

A very short way above the junction, on the same side, is Conflans, with its fine old square castle, which is rather low for its great size. The windows have round arches, and are double. It was evidently built early in the eleventh century, though it is said by some to be Roman, and was a place of great importance in early French history. Higher up on the left bank a great quantity of stone is quarried, and shipped to Paris and other parts. From the river the entrances to the quarries appear to be very small. The next place, Erbé, with its church on a hill, and on the opposite bank tall trees, is very pretty. La Frette was reached at half-past twelve, and as we got closer to Paris the number of villas increased. Great attention was evidently paid to the gardens, the geraniums particularly being very full of bloom.

At Maisons are many market gardens carefully

cultivated, each one having a well worked by a horse for irrigatory purposes. St. Germain and Le Pecq were soon reached, and at 1.10 Mont Valérien was before us. The railway here crosses the river to an island, by a bridge of three arches, and again by three arches to the other bank, and then with a viaduct of twenty arches it reaches a tunnel and goes under the hill. We kept the left side of the river, and went through the second arch of the stone bridge above. This is a good place to coal at, for it is outside the octroi lines of Paris, where the dues are very heavy.

The scenery continues to be pretty, the hills being higher, and there are more trees. We were lucky at the next lock, by name Bougival, as we met a tug with eight barges just come out of it. We had to enter it with six of the large barges that were ascending, and were carefully packed, though there was room for more. When we got through the upper gates at 2.20, we found the river above full of life, many boats rowing about, and numerous ducks in the water. On shore the shops were quite close to the

river, and crowds of people were walking along the pavement.

At three o'clock we passed Mont Valérien, its earthworks which were very visible, being apparently a hard nut to crack. When above Argenteuil we filled up the boiler as full as prudent, so as to have enough water in it till we passed Asnières, because just below the latter place all the Paris sewage is emptied into the Seine, and the acid water is very prejudicial to the boiler, and likely to set up galvanic action.

The low hills on the left are covered with vines grown in rows, and Epinay, with its spires and villas, faced us as we steamed rapidly up the river. The rain had passed away, and the afternoon was very fine. Leaving the island to starboard, we passed St. Denis on the left, with its large engineering and glass works, the fine white sand found here favouring the latter industry. This sand is carried down the Seine in barges, and shipped at Rouen for England and all parts, no sand we have being so milk-white and so fit for the manufacture of the very best glass.

The right bank is lined with factories, and

there was a great number of barges moored along the quays, which were all paved and sloping towards the water. Some of the barges we noticed as having come from Dunkerque. Here the canal to La Villette and the Canal de l'Ourcq join the Seine, and at St. Ouen is a harbour with water-gates and warehouses.

At Asnières the sewage was rushing into the river in great quantities, and we passed under the second arch of the bridge on the left side, as only this and the third arch are passable, there being very little water under the others. The water in our boiler, with what we had in our condenser, just lasted till our arrival at Paris, which we were glad of, as the filthy black water we had seen running into the river did not look tempting. Half a mile on is a weir, close to which we kept, and on the left bank are villas, gardens, and promenades all the way. The lock at Suresnes we passed at 5.20, and soon were steaming past the Bois de Boulogne on the left, and St. Cloud on the right. Though the latter town suffered much, we were glad to see the church standing uninjured, having escaped, to

a certain extent, the ravages suffered during the war.

The first, second, third, fourth, and fifth arches of the bridge at Sèvres are passable, and we soon saw the famous china works for which the town is so celebrated. At six o'clock we reached the bridge, which has two tiers of arches, and at half-past six reached Paris, having done fifty-four miles this day; it being one hundred and fifty miles from Rouen, and two hundred and thirty from Havre.

It is certainly the very best way to enter Paris by the river, passing bridge after bridge of the most noble proportions, with quays of masonry lining each bank, while on the right and left are seen the vast public buildings for which Paris is so celebrated.

We found it rather a difficult place to choose a good berth, on account of the great traffic on the river. At first we took a position below the large floating baths near the Pont Royal, but thinking this not very safe, we went ahead of them and moored all-fours close to the Frigate, and immediately below the bridge just mentioned. This is a very

good place, under the shade of some tall trees, and just opposite the Tuileries gardens, with landing-steps behind the dummies belonging to the omnibus steamboats. These, however, make rather a commotion of the water by their constant journeys up and down the river.

In cool weather, when there is not much sun, it is advisable to go a little higher up to the Ecluse de la Monnaie, the gates of which are generally open, the lock being disused except in certain states of the water. By the side of this lock there is a small port which is very little used, and to which the public have not access, the side gates being kept closed by the lock-keeper, who is very well disposed to yachts in general. Though you lose here the shade afforded by the large trees opposite the Tuileries, the comfort of repose is gained, there being no movement of the water from the constant passing of the penny boats. These are great features on the river at Paris, and are nearly always crowded with passengers on account of the cheap fares, and the ease and rapidity with which they travel from one end of

the city to the other, giving a good view of the quays and banks of the river. There are thirty-five of these screw boats, generally called "Mouches." The company to which they belong has been a great success, and pays good dividends.

The boats are all obliged, by the rules under which they are worked, to carry their number in large figures, visible by day and night; after sunset two red lights tell that a boat is going away, and two white lights that one is approaching. They are propelled by high pressure diagonal engines of twenty horse-power, the cylinders being ten inches diameter, and well, though clumsily, constructed. Instead of feed pumps, they all have Giffard's injectors. The boilers are large for the engines, and do not prime, a fault very common to small boilers. In consequence of the rules obliging the company to burn nothing but gas coke, there is no annoyance from smoke; they work at sixty to eighty pounds pressure, and run at a pace of ten knots.

The city service has fifteen stations between the Pont de Bercy and Auteuil, the fare for which is

three halfpence; another service is from the Pont de la Concorde to Sèvres, St. Cloud, and Suresnes, with a sixpenny fare. These boats, which are built at St. Denis, cost about eighteen hundred pounds each.

I can well recommend Monsieur J. de la Coux, at Asnières, for an improved oil cup, and oil specially refined for engine use. I noticed, however, a curious fact, that I had bought the best colza oil made by Sorel Frères, of Honfleur, much cheaper in London than I could get an inferior, though similar, oil in France.

We amused ourselves in Paris till the 22nd, paying interesting visits among others to the Maritime Exhibition in the Champs Elysées and the Geographical Exhibition in the Louvre; everything published on geography, and connected with the science, having been contributed by all the nations of the world.

The people in Paris have certainly benefited, in one sense, by the change of *régime*, all the parks and gardens being thrown open daily, instead of, as before, only at stated periods. One could not

but admire the beautiful arrangement of the flower-beds, and the health and vigour of the plants, which were constantly and easily watered by means of movable pipes connected with the water mains.

The French and Germans introduced the use of sub-tropical plants and carpet bedding out, now so much admired and used at home. I must admit that in good gardens they excel us in the beauty and taste shown, and in the number of public gardens well laid out with flowers in most country towns; but, on the other hand, they cannot compete with us in the number and extent of our private gardens, which are, as a rule, far superior to those in France. The Summer is finer abroad, and I could not help thinking that the plants out of doors were more full of bloom. One plant struck me as quite new for bedding purposes, that was a red begonia, which used *en masse* was most effective.

The Inspecteur de la Seine, Monsieur Gaudin, was most kind in giving every information connected with inland navigation. His duty is to watch

over, and regulate the large number of barges and steamers in the Paris section of the river, both as regards the mooring of the vessels, and discharging and taking in their cargoes.





CHAPTER VI.

PRIVILEGES—FISHER'S ADVENTURE—ROUTES BY RIVER AND
CANAL TO MARSEILLES—ROUTE TO STRASBOURG—SPECIAL
ORDERS FOR STEAM-VESSELS—ROUTES AND DISTANCES—
CURRENTS—NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS—ANCHORS—ROUTE UP
THE RHINE *vid* HOLLAND.



It is as well for the owners of steam-yachts going through the French inland waters, to avail themselves of the privileges granted to the "Yacht Club of France." These they can obtain by the good services of Monsieur Gilbert Viard, the Secretary of the Club, who takes an enthusiastic interest in all yachting matters; his address is 25, Rue Louis le Grand, Paris.

On Sunday night we had a great fright about Fisher, who had gone about one o'clock to have "a look round him," as he expressed it; and he did not return all night, only finding his way back to the vessel the next morning. According to his custom in foreign towns, when he had leave ashore, he spent the afternoon in riding about on the top of the tramway cars that run to the suburbs of Paris, which afforded, in his idea, the best and cheapest means of seeing the place. He had had two long rides for three halfpence each, and thought he had time for another in the opposite direction, so up he got again, not knowing where he was going; but to his horror, when he had arrived at the destination of the car, he found that it did not return, and he had only three halfpence left in his pocket, destined for the ride back.

He did not know where he was, or how to ask his way back. He first attached himself to a party who he thought were on the right way, but these going into a house he was put out again. Then the bright idea struck him that he would ask his way, so up he went to some

man, and repeated *bâton*, *bâton*, over and over again, instead of *bateau*, which he had heard applied to the steamer. The man grew furious, thinking Fisher was challenging him to a fight with a stick, so after a time he began to kick furiously at him, which put Fisher's blood up, and in he went at the Frenchman with his fists, and after a scuffle the latter ran away. Off went Fisher in hot pursuit, without the slightest idea of where he was going, and followed the Frenchman for a couple of miles, when he lost him, and fell into a more hopeless state of mind than before in regard to his way. After a quarter of an hour he saw his friend again, and went off after him once more, but the chase thus resumed terminated with the same result.

It was now night and quite dark, and he did not know what to do, being very tired, without money, and ignorant of a word of French. Presently he came to a seat, on which he sat down, and being almost worn out he dropped off to sleep. He did not know how long he had been in this happy state, when he was roughly roused by a policeman, who got quite angry with him because

he could not understand what he said to him. All Fisher could make out was *prison, prison*, a word the sound of which he did not at all like, so unwillingly moved on. He was also very aggravated because some one, during his slumbers, had stolen his cap, which he and the policeman for some time endeavoured to find, but without success.

The policeman having left him, as soon as he came to another seat he sat down again, but the eyes of the authorities were on the lost stranger, and the words *prison, prison*, again resounding in his ears, he was compelled to continue his hopeless walk, and trudged on till day-break, not a moment's repose being allowed him. He had never passed such a night before, and he vowed he would never again risk a three-halfpenny ride in a foreign town, unless some one who could talk the language of the place was with him.

To end the tale, in some way he found the river, and following his way along its banks, he at last came opposite the 'Ytene,' where he had to remain until the men turned out to wash the decks, when

The following are the routes and distances:

	Kilometres.
Rhine, by River Ill, to Strasbourg	3
Canal de la Marne au Rhin	378
Marne, from Ecluse No. 14, near Epernay	
to entrance to Seine at Charenton	212
Charenton to Paris	9
Paris to Havre	367
	<hr/>
	969

equal to six hundred and five miles, with two hundred and nineteen locks and five tunnels, one of 2300 metres, one of 475 metres, one of 500 metres, one of 5000 metres, and one short one.

The current of the Rhine is very strong, especially at Bingen lock, where it runs seven miles an hour, and at Maxau, where a current of nine miles an hour is met with, requiring plenty of power to surmount it, especially as it continues for many miles, and is felt for at least one whole day's journey. I was rather troubled with it when I wanted to bring up at night. Two anchors were

required out in the stream, and two warps to the shore, with poles to keep the vessel off the stony bank, and this too under the shelter of a friendly bend of the river. I consider it more prudent to ascend a river like this than to descend it, and therefore I recommend a start to be made *viâ* Holland up the Rhine.


Care must be taken to have anchors with extra large palms, and to engage the regular pilots from place to place, and trust none unless they show their medals or certificates. It is almost impossible to obtain a man who knows the whole river, as it is the custom for each pilot to keep to his own section.





CHAPTER VII.

RECTIFICATION OF THE BED OF THE SEINE—THE THAMES—
TRAFFIC BY CANALS—HOW THEY MANAGE IN FRANCE—
TONNAGE OF BARGES, &c., ON THE SEINE—GRADUAL IM-
PROVEMENT OF THE RIVER—CONDITION OF THE RIVER
BEFORE THE ERA OF IMPROVEMENT—SHALLOWS AND RAPIDS
—OBLIGATORY SERVICE OF PILOTAGE ABOLISHED.

HE rectification of the bed of the River Seine has been so carefully and diligently made, and the effect of it so important to the trade of Paris, that I am induced to give a few particulars and details concerning this great work. The results which have followed are well worthy the consideration of our engineers, and I hope some day to see a canal with large locks and good depth of

water, by which the mineral wealth of South Wales may find a ready access to London down our noble River Thames, which has been in so neglected a state for years, and which is only now being in some degree improved under the care of the Thames Conservancy. I fear, however, that the conservators consider the sale of its water to the London Companies of more importance than the legitimate use of the river as a means of carrying heavy traffic, such as coal, &c., which now blocks up our railways, and cannot be profitably carried at a sufficiently cheap price to compete with the North country coal, which is not only inferior in quality for steam purposes, but by its smoky character enshrouds London with a black cloud.

Our legislature surely was asleep when it allowed the Great Western Railway to appropriate the Kennet and Avon Canal, and thus to bar the navigation to the Bristol Channel at its will by heavy tolls. The river above Oxford is quite unfit in its present state to carry goods, and the Thames and Severn Canal is fast going to decay. Our neighbours in France would never have allowed

such a state of affairs, the policy of the Government there having been always to encourage commerce, by giving all facilities to communication by water, thus keeping the carriage of goods at as low a rate as possible, and preventing the railways from having a monopoly, and charging rates that might tend to discourage industries.

The navigation of the Seine is divided into two distinct parts, that of the Upper Seine between Mery and Paris and that of the Lower Seine between Paris and the sea. This latter part is again divided into the section made navigable by means of locks to Poses, and the tidal part between Poses and the sea.

The navigable part of the Seine maintained at a sufficient depth artificially is the

Upper Seine	.	.	.	136	}	286
Lower Seine	.	.	.	150		
Tidal Seine	.	.	.	.		80
						<hr/>
Miles						366

The expense of improving these three parts of the river to the 31st December, 1870, amounted to £2,764,000, of which £500,000 were spent on

the tidal portion. The tonnage carried by vessels and barges amounted to 3,810,000 tons according to the returns published for the year 1868. Since that time, however, there has been a very large increase in the tonnage, the use of steam power having come much more into use for towing purposes since that year.

By the powers conferred by various laws from 1837 to 1853, the chief improvements have been effected. Before that time the only lock above Paris was one at Nogent, constructed in the year 1677. In 1845 the law which effected the greatest improvement was passed. The following quotation shows the state of the river at that time.

“The numerous windings of the bed of the Seine, which are produced in the sandy bottoms by the action of the water, and the imperfection of the towing-paths, are sources of grave difficulty for the navigation.

“The shallows, which occupy about a quarter of the development of the river, only give, in low water, in dry seasons, a depth of from nine to twenty-seven inches, and during a third of the

Through France and Belgium.

year, only a draught of water less than thirty-four inches, which is equivalent to an entire interruption of the navigation. The gravelly beaches and the towing paths are not raised high, and are submerged at many places by an increase of six feet nine inches above the lowest level in dry seasons. Even then the upstream traffic is interrupted, and the descending navigation is very little and dangerous."

The result of the works undertaken with the funds provided by the laws of 1837 and 1846 enabled barges to ascend above Paris to Montereau, with a draft of three feet four inches in the driest seasons, when the river was not high enough for good navigation. This was done by making locks and weirs, raising the level of the towing-paths, embanking the river where requisite, and by deepening the channel.

At Paris, quays and basins for the barges were made, and a lock opposite the Hôtel des Monnaies to get rid of the three feet difference of level in the river-bed between the Pont Neuf and the Pont des Arts; this, however, is only used when the river is very low. All shallow parts were

deepened, and the river was made perfect in every respect in this section of the city.

Above Montereau the locks are twenty-six feet and a quarter wide, and a hundred and sixty-eight feet long ; and between Montereau and Paris they are forty-feet and a half wide, and no less than five hundred and forty feet long, to allow a train of barges being towed to pass through together.

In the first half of the century the river below Paris, though it had been gradually improved from time to time, was in such a bad state from shoals and obstructions at the bridges, that at certain places from forty to sixty horses, aided by from two to three hundred men, were necessary to enable a loaded barge to pass some of the obstacles, at a cost of from £6 to £8. Many propositions were brought forward by various engineers and others, and in 1827 a powerful company proposed to spend £6,000,000 in making a canal where necessary, so as to give seven and a half feet depth above Rouen, and eight feet below that town. The advent of railroads, however, caused this plan to be put aside.

At that time the cost of a ton of goods, such as sugar for example, to be carried by water from Havre to Paris, was seventy-one francs and a half, the freight alone, without the other expenses, was thirty-three francs, insurance, duties, &c., making up the balance.

As in the case of the Upper Seine, it was by virtue of the laws of 1837 and 1846 that the river below Paris was taken in hand by the Government. Thirteen principal groups of shallow places were then chosen for special operations. These places had only two to three feet of water, and the navigation was very difficult, as the barges were obliged to keep in the channel, where they encountered the full force of the stream, which was then violent. Not only was this the case, but the arches of the bridges were not wide enough, and the towing-path often changed from one side of the river to the other—thus occasioning much expense and delay.

The four worst places as regarded shallows were at Morue, near Bezons, Gourdaines, near Vernon, Poses and Martot, near Pont de l'Arche. At Morue a machine deepened the channel for a

width of fourteen yards. This was done with difficulty, for work could only be carried on when the river was high and consequently when the navigation was very active. A weir and lock were also made at Bougival, which quite overcame the difficulties at this place, and enabled loaded barges to pass at all times, without having the need of special pilots and an auxiliary staff of horses.

The shallows at Gourdaines and some others near were done away with, as regarded the navigation, by a passage called the Goulet, which was finished in 1849, and to which was added the lock of Garenne, with two weirs. The shallows and rapids at Poses and Pampou required a lock and three weirs, which entirely surmounted the worst place on the river. This lock was finished in 1852, but the necessary weirs were not completed till 1854. At Marlot, the use of the machine caused the channel to be sufficiently deepened.

At all bridges, where it was necessary, new arches of sufficient width were constructed, the towing-paths were raised and made good. Where the horses required to cross the river, the bridges were

used instead of ferry-boats, which caused delay and expense. Other locks and weirs were afterwards built, making eight in all between Paris and Rouen. These improvements gave an average depth of five feet and a half, that which now exists; but in dry seasons, especially at the end of Summer and in Autumn, there is not more than from three feet and a half to four feet just below La Roche Guyon, which depth will be much improved when the new lock and weir near Port Villez are completed. These works, however, are in abeyance, though half-finished.

One result of these improvements, which showed the importance of them, was that, by a Ministerial order, the obligatory service of pilotage, which had existed for two centuries, was abolished. The distance following the course of the river from the Lock de la Monnaie to the stone bridge at Rouen is two hundred and forty and a half kilometres, viz :

	Metres.
Lock de la Monnaie to the Bridge	
de la Concorde	1,632
Bridge de la Concorde to La Briche .	25,879

	Metres.
From La Briche to the entrance to	
River Oise	42,400
River Oise to Mantes	38,600
Mantes to Vernon	40,000
Vernon to Andelys	24,000
Andelys to the entrance of River	
Andelle	28,200
Andelle to the entrance of River Eure	4,000
Eure to Pont-de-l'Arche	1,800
Pont-de-l'Arche to Elbœuf	11,500
Elbœuf to Rouen	22,500
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	240,511

equal to one hundred and fifty miles.

The smallest lock between Paris and Rouen is that at Pont-de-l'Arche, which is thirteen yards wide and eighty-three yards long.

The depth of water available for barges is regulated and registered daily at the lock at Mantes. The zero of the guage is thirty-two inches above the shallowest place, and when the depth is over five feet, the regulation of the water ceases. The *Journal de Rouen* daily gives the useful information

of the actual available depth. Between Rouen and Havre the funds, granted by the law of 1846, were devoted to the construction of a towing path between Rouen and Mailleraye, and the making of two longitudinal dykes between Villequier and Quillebœuf. The result of these latter works was to cause the sandbanks between Aizier and Villequier to disappear, and the navigation which was often stopped, always difficult, and very often dangerous, was rendered easy and safe.

The making of the new banks had also another remarkable result ; the bar which, with a Spring tide, was felt with so much violence at Villequier, has almost entirely disappeared, and the duration of the flood-tide has augmented one hour at Villequier and at all places above this place ; the tide also flows a quarter of an hour longer between Villequier and Quillebœuf. This is accounted for by the increase of the depth of water between the new dykes, from three feet to over twelve feet.

In 1853 a sum of £32,000 was spent in further improving the navigation between Mailleraye and Villequier, and £80,000 to continue the dyke as

far as Tancarville. The result of these embankments has been not only to improve the navigation, but to reclaim large tracts, and to render the lands along the river less subject to the flooding by salt water, which constantly took place and rendered them of little value. There is now ten feet at low water between Rouen and Quillebœuf, with the exception of the bank at Meules, where there is only six and a half feet. All the dues levied on the Seine, like nearly all inland navigation dues in France, are received by the State.

I have before mentioned the system of towage, by means of a submerged chain from Havre to Paris and up to Montereau; this is so generally used that the use of horses for towage purposes on the Seine is quite discontinued.





CHAPTER VIII.

DEPARTURE FROM PARIS—RUN TO CONFLANS—ENGAGEMENT
OF A PILOT—ON THE OISE—CHATEAU VAUBRAL—PONTOISE—
PIERRE-TURQUOISE—ROYAUMONT—A HURRICANE—ST. LEU—
PONT ST. MAXENCE—SCENERY ON THE RIVER.



ON the 22nd September orders were given to light up and to prepare to get under weigh, so at 11.40, having cast off our warps and got the anchors on board, we gave a touch to the link motion by means of the handle on the right, and admitting steam to the cylinders by raising the handle on the left side of the tiller, we were off. In a minute the 'Ytene' obeyed the motion given by the tiller being put hard over, and we were steaming down stream,

leaving the Pont Royal, the Frigate, and the remains of the Tuileries behind us.

The *Mouche*, No. 35, left the landing-station at the same time, and there was a race between French and English, but with forty-five pounds of steam (we could have worked up to one hundred pounds pressure, if we had been pushed to it in a long struggle) we were more than a match for the passenger-boat. In three quarters of an hour we were in Suresnes Lock. Monsieur and Madame G——, with their daughter and Monsieur Viard, were our guests for the run down to Conflans. At Asnières a stay was made to procure a supply of oil, as we considered it unnecessary to pay the heavy octroi duty in Paris, which literally doubled the price.

At three o'clock we were off again, and when the lockman at Bougival demanded our *laissez-passez*, we found that important document had been quite forgotten, a circumstance which put me in rather a fidget; but it was discovered, fortunately, that there was a *Bureau de la Navigation* at the lock, and the precious little piece of yellow paper was secured at the price of one penny for the stamp

on it, which was available as far as the Belgian frontier. The afternoon, unfortunately, turned out wet; but we were a merry party at dinner, which we had arranged to have at a rather early hour, so that it might be over in time before our arrival at Conflans, which was reached at 6.30. Some of our friends, who had never been on a yacht before, were much amused and astonished at the arrangements, and at the number of little comforts we had stowed away in a small compass. The vessel was moored alongside one of the floating establishments by Godon, the pilot, who charged twelve francs and his railway fare for his services from Paris.

The rain blew off in the night, and we were awakened at an early hour by the chatter and noise made by the occupants of the neighbouring vessel, and we vowed never again to make fast to one of a similar description.

At the *embouchure* of the River Oise, a stay was made alongside a steam chain-towboat, and I went ashore to the public-house frequented by the pilots, and made arrangements with Esselin to guide the vessel to Compiègne for a sum of thirty-five francs.

He said his usual charge for barges was fifty francs from Conflans to Rouen, and twenty francs to Paris; but these amounts are considered small for yachts, which may want to stay a day or so at places of interest on the Seine. At twelve o'clock we started again, and found ample height for the funnel under the bridge over the Oise, which was seven yards from the water. These bridges are very deceptive, and always look lower than they really are. Preparations were made, however, for lowering the funnel, the bolts and nuts being taken out of the flanges, and a tackle rigged to one of the spars that supported the awning, which was always kept spread as a shelter from both sun and rain.

About five miles up the River Oise is Château Vauréal, with pretty gardens sloping down to the water, and a little farther on we noticed that several of the poplar trees, close together, had had their heads broken off at the same height, about half way up, the stems being of good diameter. This, our pilot told us, had been done by a sudden gust, or *tourbillon*, of wind in a gale,

which was accompanied with torrents of hail, and did great damage.

We passed Erangy on the right, and on the left Pontoise, where there is a lock, and a new bridge with round arches, built in 1872, to replace the old one from which the town took its name. The church of St. Maclou is worth inspection, being built in various styles, and there is some fine old painted glass. The town was taken by the English in 1437, by a clever stratagem. It was Winter time, and, the ground being covered with snow, the soldiers were dressed in white, and at night succeeded in scaling the walls unseen. There is an island a mile or two above the town, with good water on both sides of it. Much stone of very good quality is cut in the hill sides for the Paris trade, and is carried there by water. The river is much like the Upper Thames with its willows, poplars and rushes.

At Stors, on the right bank, is a new cemetery for Paris, and a railway is being constructed from Paris to Creil. There is a large country house on the same side as the village, with a private chapel and lodge, and some large cedars are in the grounds.

Opposite the first part of the wall, it is necessary to keep towards the left bank of the river, and when the other end is reached a vessel must be brought to the centre, as there is not much water on the right side, where there are large stones on the bottom. At l'Isle Adam, seventeen miles from the Seine, there is a circular weir across the river, and the lock is placed round the corner of it.

At Champagne, the fine church tower was in the process of restoration ; two and a half miles on the route is Beaumont, on the right, where is found, in the Forest of Carnelle, a Celtic monument, which is locally called "Pierre Turquoise." On the left is now seen a line of high hills, ahead is also high ground, and the general scenery is very pleasant. The bridge here is rather peculiar, there being three round arches in the centre, with one long arch on each side. Care must be taken to go through the one on the left side of the river as you ascend it, there not being water sufficient under the others ; only one foot was to spare over our

funnel, which was fourteen feet high from the water.

All the barges met were coal-laden, coming from the Belgian coal-fields; they were very deep, having two hundred and seventy tons on board, and drawing six feet of water.

Royaumont lock was reached at 3.45, when the fat old lockman, who certainly had an immense crop in a large garden he rented, sold us a large basket full of apples for a franc. The Abbey here, which has some magnificent cloisters, and a fine refectory of the thirteenth century, was founded by St. Louis in 1228, and was occupied until the year 1791, when it was abandoned; but some monks have lately bought it again, and it is in course of restoration. The tower of the Church is very singular, as it is surmounted by a short spire surrounded by smaller ones. The river is crossed by means of a suspension bridge. We noticed a train just leaving the railway station close by, and I could not but think how glad we were to be free from Bradshaws and all the troubles of luggage, hotels, cabs, &c.

On the left side, on the top of the hill, we saw a very old farm-house. The hurricane of wind and rain, mentioned before, did great damage here. A water-spout must have broken, for the earth had been washed quite away in two or three places, forming ravines, which are stated to have been made in a very short time. We afterwards met a barge that had been *en route* at the time of this tempest, and the scene was described by the owner as fearful. The vessel had been driven against the banks, and the horses were pulled into the river, not being able to withstand the strain on them. The wind hurled the very water up from the river, and no one could stand against the blasts and rain.

The railway runs close to the left bank at Precy, which we reached at 4.20. Just above are some red buoys on the starboard, and white ones on the port-hand, but the towing ropes have swept away some of the latter.

On the right side is a large factory where nails are made for Paris, and beyond this the bank rises steeply from the river, which on the

opposite side is shaded by fine woods. At St. Leu, on the left, is a splendid old church of the eleventh century; without a transept, but with three naves and three towers, one of which is surmounted with a stone spire. Passing a sugar refinery and stone quarries, we come to the railway again, which crosses the river some miles up, and the hills are covered with turf, on which we saw many rabbits and some hares; an unusually rare sight in France, where anything that may be called *gibier* is so seldom seen.

At Mont-à-terre, on the right, is a very old château and church, about three miles inland, belonging to the Jesuits. Just below Creil are some very large iron-works, which cannot be very profitable, as all the ore and coal to smelt it are brought by railway and barges from a distance. We brought up at six o'clock at a village between Creil and Verneuil, having done thirty-six miles. It is difficult to go fast with a tolerably large vessel in a river of the size of the Oise, on account of the water not being so elastic as it is when the volume is larger, the displacement caused

by the progress of the vessel being very great.

A start was made again the next morning at ten o'clock, and in less than half an hour we passed under Pont St. Maxence, built in the year 1774, which is one of the best works of the architect Perronet. It consists of three arches of twenty-seven yards each, and the piers are composed of four large columns, which, placed together, have a strong yet light appearance. The village is said to take its name from an Irishman, by name Maxence, who suffered martyrdom here in the third century. It met with constant disasters in the troublous times of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but is now rich with manufactories. At Sarron lock we had to wait some time while two horses strove to pull out of the locks one of the large two hundred and seventy ton barges, which are made to fit them so closely that it requires the greatest exertion to pull them out, not less than half an hour being sometimes expended in the task.

There is a charming country-house surrounded with graceful trees on the right bank; the owner of which apparently takes pleasure in aquatic pur-

suits, for his centreboard sailing-boat was moored opposite the house. A steam-yacht, however, was evidently an unusual sight, for two of the men-servants came running in hot haste to see us steam by. Five miles further on is pretty wooded and hilly country, one of the hills having a summer-house in the form of a temple on the summit. We met much traffic here, barges loaded with coals descending, and empty ones ascending. The former all had small lug sails, set in a strange manner, high up, and abaft the masts, to catch the favouring breeze.

While going through Verberie lock, we sat idly viewing the charming scene down the river. Verberie was a favourite place of the Merovingian Kings. Charles Martel died there, and Charlemagne rebuilt the Palace in 808; but in later ages the villagers used the materials to build their own houses. Many Roman remains have been found near here.



CHAPTER IX.

COMPIÈGNE—PRICE OF FUEL—ENGLISH COLONY—DELIGHTFUL
EVENING WITH THE REV. W. L. MASON—DRIVE IN THE
FOREST—PIERREFONDS—GAY TIMES AT COMPIÈGNE—ROMAN
REMAINS—GRAND OLD MEDIEVAL CASTLE—ARRANGEMENTS
OF THE CHIEF SLEEPING APARTMENT—BEAUTIFUL GAR-
DEN—PRIVATE ROOMS OF THE EMPEROR AND HIS FAMILY.

AT 1.20 we steamed under the bridge of Compiègne, a fine edifice of three arches built by order of Louis XV. We soon made fast alongside the wharf. The pilot Esselin was now paid off, as we had arranged to stay here over the Sunday; and came to the conclusion that a pilot was hardly necessary in the River Oise,

at all events in the ordinary state of the water, it being so completely canalised. Our first business was to take in one ton of coal, which cost forty-four francs; for a quicker burning coal they asked forty-nine francs. The nearer we got to Belgium the cheaper it was, so I was unwilling to burden the vessel with fuel at so dear a rate.

There are several racing-stables kept near here, where many English are employed, who must soon lose all their native ideas of how Sunday should be kept, as the races all over France nearly always take place on Sundays. We found Compiègne a most charming place, with all the requisites for an English Colony, as there is a beautiful little church that was built and endowed by the late Honourable Mrs. Russell Barrington for the use of English visitors and residents. We were most kindly welcomed by the incumbent, the Reverend W. L. Mason, M.A., who soon called on us, his little sons having run home in the greatest state of excitement, with the news that a yacht flying English colours was alongside the quay. We spent a delightful evening with his musical family, and were soon put in the way of seeing the beauties of

the Forest of Compiègne and the Château of Pierrefonds. There are good arrangements here for the reception of young ladies whose friends are desirous that they should learn French in France, and from what we both saw and heard of those who conduct the school, we can strongly recommend the establishment, the adjoining forest offering an open recreation-ground seldom met with abroad within such easy reach of home.

We took a walk in the afternoon in the forest, and fell in with one of the keepers, who told us that during the war nearly all the game had been destroyed by the Germans and poachers, but that the stock was now increasing. A part of the forest, which was carefully fenced in and watched, was now let for £160 a year.

Before breakfast next morning, our three masts were set up and rigged, and much pleasure was given to the natives by our flying the Tricolor on the foremast. The day was showery, but we engaged a carriage to drive through the forest to Pierrefonds, an ancient Château restored by order of the Emperor, great interest being taken in the work by His Majesty. Unlike those in our natural

forests, the trees are all planted in rows, with avenues cut from centres, where there are sign-posts with directions, and a red mark is always placed on the side towards Compiègne. We drove along a drive called the Route d'Eugénie, because it was the favourite drive of the Empress.

This took us by the old mill, past several lakes, where there were Summer-houses by the side of the water, and we saw the pleasure-boats used in the gay times when the Palace at Compiègne was occupied by the Emperor and his numerous guests, who were asked to the number of a hundred at a time, their stay being generally ten days, when a fresh set arrived.

Merry and gay was the forest then ; parties and sports of every kind made it ring with joy and laughter, all of which the poor residents in the forest villages now look on as things of the past, and not likely to return except with a return of the Empire.

In one village, where there was no place of worship, and the people were in the greatest state of ignorance, the Empress ordered a suitable house to be converted into a church, and schools opened ;

and now we were told there was a great improvement in the rising generation. We left our carriage and walked up the rising ground of Beaumont, from which there is a wide avenue in the forest direct to Compiègne. The view was glorious, looking right over the tops of the trees in all directions; and at the end of the long and straight grassy glade was the noble white palace. This avenue is used as a practice ground for the soldiers, the movable butts being placed at Beaumont; and we saw several men and boys gaining a scanty livelihood by picking up the Chassepot bullets, which they sold for old lead. By looking about, I soon picked up two or three myself.

There are many remains of Roman buildings found in the forest, in over twenty localities, but we could not spare the time to go and see them, especially as they are not very considerable. We put up at the Grand Hôtel du Château, and ordered dinner to be prepared while we went to see the glorious mediæval castle, with high embattled walls and round towers rising above them at the corners and intervals. The situation was well chosen for defence on a high pointed piece of ground, the

whole of which it nearly covered. This feudal pile of buildings was constructed by Louis, Duke of Orléans, in 1390, on the site of an older building. It was dismantled by Richelieu in 1617, but having become State property in the time of the first Empire, a restoration was commenced in 1858, under the direction of M. Viollet-le-Duc.

Skilfully has he done his work, which is now almost complete, but the overthrow of the Empire has caused the place to be deserted and only visited by tourists. It covers nearly seven thousand square yards of surface, and the castle is an irregular quadrilateral in shape, each front having three large battlemented towers. The entrance gate, under an advanced work with drawbridges, gives access to the castle on the south. The halls or rooms in the interior are very large, with enormous fireplaces, all of which have been restored with oak fittings and carvings. The arrangement of the chief sleeping apartment was very curious. There was a high wooden screen behind the bed for the soldiers who at night guarded its occupants. One could not but reflect how dangerous must have been the days when such a protection was required in such a

stronghold. We also visited the gardens of a gentleman residing in a fine country-house near the castle. These were bedded out in the best style, all the plants being very vigorous and full of bloom, and the stoves and plant-houses arranged with more than common taste. The head-gardener deserved the greatest praise for his care and talent. I never saw plants in greater vigour and health, which he attributed to giving them all the air possible, having, of course, due regard to temperature. There was one thing, however, that struck me; no vegetables or fruit were grown, all the labour and energy being directed to the ornamental part. These gardens were of large extent, and the entire arrangement of the plants, the combinations of colour, &c., were entirely left to the *chef*. Much would I have liked to engage him on the spot. Lill and Titus had the honour of being sent for to pay a visit to the house, and came dancing back very delighted at the petting they had received.

In the Palace of Compiègne, on the ground floor, is a rare and curious collection of antiquities from Cochin China. There were many statues, the faces

of which all gave the lines of the mouth turning up, which naturally caused them to have a pleasing and smiling expression.

We made interest to go through the late private rooms of the Emperor and his family. I trust I shall be excused giving a detailed description of them. A door leading from the picture galleries led to the Prince Imperial's bedroom, the most remarkable ornament in which was a tazza with a large and splendid cameo of Napoleon I. This room opened into the Empress's reception-room, next which was her bedroom, with a large bed all gilt. On the right of this was the dressing-room, the bureau in which was covered with large and fine Wedgwood plaques, then the music-room with buffets of Chinese and Japanese make, fine old Gobelin tapestry covering the walls; then the library of the Emperor, the ceiling of which was painted with Mercury and two other figures. In the book-cases the works were mostly on travels, history, natural history, biography, encyclopedias, military and scientific subjects, and general books of reference. The Emperor's copy of Cæsar, with notes in pencil made by himself, was the only thing taken by the

Germans from the Palace, as we were told by the people in charge. General Manteufel lived here when his division of the army occupied this part of the country for a long time. Then followed the Emperor's bedroom with a sofa-bed. In this room was a very fine head of Napoleon I. in marble. The council-room was adorned with Gobelin tapestry round the walls. In the family reception-room, the centre window of which looked straight down the avenue to Beaumont, the Imperial sporting parties met to go to the *chasse*. We also saw the room for the aides-de-camp, the *salle-à-manger* for friends, and the reception-room for foreign princes, hung with tapestry. The boudoir of the Princess Matilda, which was formerly occupied by Marie Antoinette, was adorned with tapestry, the subject depicted on which was Venus being dressed by Cupids. In the bedroom of the Princess Matilda was the celebrated old Sèvres vase on which was painted the Gondola of the Doge of Venice.

The small English party assembled at the church on Sunday morning and afternoon, and at the second service the sermon was preached by a

Canon of Lincoln who was visiting Compiègne with his family.

We received on board in the afternoon, and arranged to take a party as far as Chauny in the yacht, and to go all together to visit Courcy-le-Château, so celebrated for its owners in days long gone by. M. Viollet-le-Duc says of the donjon of Courcy, "After this giant, the largest towers known, whether in France, in Italy, or in Germany, are only gun-barrels."





CHAPTER X.

FRENCH BARGEES—CHATEAU DE COURCY—THE DONJON—
DUNGEONS OF THE CASTLE—TOWN OF COURCY—THEFT OF
AN INDIAN-RUBBER WATERPROOF—GENERAL HONESTY OF
THE PEOPLE—A CHURLISH DIRECTOR OF GLASS-WORKS—
CANAL OF ST. QUENTIN—LARGE FAMILIES NEAR THE FEON-
TIER—CURIOUS GEOLOGICAL FORMATION—ST. QUENTIN—
THE CATHEDRAL.



SEPTEMBER 27th, we started again at nine o'clock, very pleased with our visit to Compiègne. We had a party of seven besides ourselves on board. Just above Compiègne (about two miles) is the junction of the river Aisne with the Oise, sixty-three miles distant from the Seine at Conflans. This is an important junction, for in dry weather, when there is not much water in the river Marne,

barges, going by the Marne and Rhine canal from or to Paris, come by this route, branching off at Condé-sur-Marne, and by using the Canal de l'Aisne à la Marne, the Canal Latéral de l'Aisne, and the rivers Aisne and Oise, they avoid the shallow water of the river Marne.

The wind was blowing very strongly behind us, which gave us much trouble at the locks, if there was any detention from the barges. These were more numerous than ever to-day, and the entrance to the lock at Janville was almost choked by them; but by never giving way an inch, and with fenders on each side, they were stowed closer together, and we squeezed through. I always found that a pleasant word or two, spoken in French, to the bargees, with an assertion of our rights as a steamer, soon got over any difficulty. Two pilots asked us for a passage as far as Pont l'Evêque, which was given with pleasure.

At Chauny lock we had the same trouble again, and did not get through till 3.10, when we moored just above; and Mr. Barrett went up the dirty town to procure a carriage to go to Courcy, which we found was twelve miles distant. There was

great difficulty in getting a conveyance, and it was not until 4.30 that one appeared on the scene, with a pair of horses that it would be difficult to describe, and the smallest of boys as a driver. It was very small too, but at last our party of six was packed in it, and with much laughter we proceeded on our expedition; three of our friends, who had accompanied us from Compiègne, having returned there by railway. It was six o'clock before we reached our destination, and getting dark fast; but a bright moon was rising, so we made the best of our time, and entered the gates of the old château, which we found open. There was some difficulty, however, with the man appointed to take care of the property, who said it was after the regulation hours, and we could not see it. His objections, however, were soon got over, and we went to see the outlying parts first, reserving the great donjon for the last, as inside it was already quite dark. Like all these feudal edifices, it is placed on a sharply rising elevation, the escarpments of which are about one hundred and fifty feet high, and it covers a surface of about twelve thousand yards in circum-

ference. It was erected at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and was very quickly built. The general plan is that of an irregular square, with a strong tower two hundred feet high at each of the angles. These are much ruined, and present, from the interior as well as the exterior, a most picturesque appearance.

In the centre of this enclosed space is the donjon, a hundred and ninety feet high, and ninety-five feet in diameter, the walls of which are twenty-five feet in thickness at the bottom, and about nine feet thick at the top, being built of large stones well wrought. Over the entrance door is a bas-relief representing the fight between Enguerrand II. and a lion. The three stories were constructed with vaulted ceilings; but these are now all gone, and from below you look up to the top of the tower, which is now protected from the weather by a skylight.

With the aid of a lantern, provided by the custode, we ascended the winding staircase made in the thickness of the wall, only one of the ladies venturing to make the ascent with us, the others remaining below. On arriving at the sum-

mit, we found it quite unprotected by a parapet, but the width rendered it easy for steady heads to make the tour of the tower, notwithstanding the strong breeze. The view by daylight is splendid, extending as far as Laon, Compiègne, and Noyon. It was also very fine by moonlight, with the great clouds rolling up, and the moon shining brightly amidst them. At some little way from the donjon, near one of the towers in the wall, were the dungeons where prisoners were confined. Dreadful was their appearance; a round hole, about thirty inches in diameter on the level of the ground, was the entrance, with a windlass over it; this was the only means of descent to and ascent from the dismal circular vault below. Under this prison was another, with the same means of access, and of the same dimensions. There was a lower depth still, and awful must have been the fate of the poor wretches doomed to these underground cells, from which they had not the slightest chance of escape from their powerful and proud captors, whose device was: "*Roi ne suis,—ne prince, ne duc, ne comte aussy,—je suys le sire de Coucy.*" The large and deep well was dry and

full of stones. Great were the regrets that, from the lateness of the season, we could not spare another day to return with the camera and chemicals to secure some views of this old stronghold, which quite comes up to the saying of M. Viollet-le-Duc.

At the entrance to the town of Courcy are two large, strong round towers, with a pointed arch between them, under which the road runs, and over the arch is a pointed window. High walls with towers at one time encircled the town; the towers are still standing near the gates.

It was 9.30 before we got back to our vessel, fairly tired out, but very pleased indeed with our evening's excursion. Two of our men were in luck to-night, being asked to supper by one of the managers of a large glass factory, who entertained them in the best way possible.

During the day I missed an india-rubber waterproof sheet, which was stolen from our decks at four o'clock in the morning, before we left Compiègne. I was awake by the noise of a boat touching the side of our vessel, and I got up and looked

out, when I heard from a barge from the Ardennes, laden with wood, and which was moored just behind us, one of the men say to another, "*Il s'entendent !*" and I felt sure that there had been an attempt at a theft.

I mention this trifling occurrence, because it was the only thing we lost all the voyage, though we were constantly moored close to numerous vessels, and we kept no watch whatever. I do not think there can be an honester set of people than these men who gain a scanty livelihood on the foreign canals.

The next morning we were unsuccessful in gaining permission to view the large glass works at Chauny; the Managing Director, M. Bivet, unlike all his fellow-countrymen, of all classes, that we were brought in contact with, being really most uncivil. I trust he, when visiting England, will never meet with the reception that he gave an English gentleman and lady who wished to see foreign industries. The glass that is rolled and polished here is made at St. Quentin. There are several agencies in England for the sale of the glass, and there are dépôts at New York, London, and

Paris. About two thousand hands are employed, who work in relays by day and night, for the pay of five francs a-day. The bulk of the coal used comes from Newcastle. The chemical works, which are near the glass works, employ about one thousand five hundred men. Carbonate and hyposulphate of soda, and chloride of lime, are the chief products; we heard that the workmen suffer much in their health in these works, many losing all their teeth.

September 28th.—We were off this morning at 10.30, and entered a fresh canal, that of St. Quentin, where we did not make much progress beyond passing ten or eleven locks, unlike those we had gone through. There were no iron ladders to ascend from the vessel by; the sides are very smooth from friction with the barges, and the sluices are rather dangerous for small boats, which should take care in passing through them.

Near Voyaux, eight miles from St. Quentin, are coal stores with tramways to the mines. At St. Simon, fifteen miles from St. Quentin, on the left, is the junction of the Canal de la Somme, passing by Amiens and Abbeville to St. Valéry, near the

entrance of the River Somme, which flows into the English Channel. This route is a hundred miles from the junction of the navigation at St. Simon. The depth of this canal is over five feet.

At Sérancourt they wished to pretend that we had a wrong *laissez passez*, and endeavoured to extort money; but on threatening to appeal to the Administration, a humbler tone was soon produced. The people in this part of France are poorer, and the houses more wretched in appearance, than any we had hitherto seen. It was a curious fact that the nearer we approached the frontier the more children there were to be seen, and on inquiry we found that families were much larger than in other parts of France. There was a very small river all the way on the left side of the canal, not more than six feet wide; this, I presume, was still the River Oise. Its course was marked with pollard willows and rushes; of course, the interminable rows of poplars still lined the banks of the canal.

After we passed the embranchment of La Fère, which is on the right hand side near Chauny, we

did not find so much traffic, as all the barges from Brussels and the Charleroi coal-fields come by the Sambre, which is connected with the system of the River Oise at La Fère. Near Sérancourt there is a great deal of stone quarried, and cut into small squares for street pavements. Vegetables were very cheap, also fruit. We bought five peaches for a halfpenny.

The barometer began to fall to-day fast, and registered nearly half an inch lower than yesterday, and the threatening clouds showed that the fine weather we had had all the month was breaking up.

Near Jussy was noticed a very curious geological formation in the cliff, in a chalk quarry on the right bank. There was a thick bed of clay on the top, then six feet of chalk under it, beneath that fifteen feet of clay, and lowest of all another great stratum of chalk. The division lines were quite level, and it would be a puzzle for geologists to account for this formation, the conditions of the deposits being so different. We moored above two barges just past Sérancourt, where there is a large factory.

The next morning, September 29th, the weather was still fine, and we were on our way at 9.30, passing large sugar works, nearly all the land being planted with beet-root, of which there was an enormous crop; too much so, we were told, as the roots were too large and watery, causing much extra labour, with no increase of sugar, which was besides very difficult of extraction, on account of the large percentage of salt taken up by the plant this Summer, in the early part of which there had been so much rain. The wheat and other grain crops had been also very large, and we heard that there had never been a better general harvest of all kinds of crops than there had been this year in France.

As at the entrance of all the towns, there was a great blockage of barges at St. Quentin, where we arrived at eleven o'clock. This place is twenty miles distant from Chauny. There is a large factory to distil spirit from the sugar beet, which is a money-making trade in France, the peculiar flavour of the beet being skilfully eliminated. The spirit no doubt is sold, when doctored,

as gin, brandy, &c., and probably formed part of the fine Madeira that was to be shipped at Rouen.

There is a branch of the canal right into the heart of the town, but we brought up in the main canal outside for an hour or two, to go and see the cathedral and have a walk in St. Quentin. It takes its name from Caius Quintinus, a young Christian of a noble family, who in the third century came to this place to preach Christianity, and in consequence was sentenced to death by the orders of the Prefect Riccius Varus. The cathedral, part of which dates from 1114, is considered one of the finest in the north of France. It has two transepts, which is of rare occurrence. In the crypt repose the remains of St. Quentin and his two companions in martyrdom, St. Victorine and St. Cassien. This crypt is under the chancel, and over it is a *grille* of marvellously wrought iron work of great antiquity.

Across the chancel there is also a splendid specimen of ironwork, of which the gates are composed, representing flowers and leaves, the

skill and labour of doing which by hammer work must have been very great. In the market place is a fine statue of M. De la Tour, who left his fine collection of paintings to the town, and they are preserved in the museum.

It was very interesting to notice a baker carrying round bread in his cart to his customers, with a wooden tally for each house, a notch on which was cut for each loaf delivered. Formerly accounts were kept in this country in the same way.

St. Quentin is a large place, with thirty thousand inhabitants, with many factories of cotton, net, and tulle. It was the locality of a great battle fought just outside the town during the late war, the Germans being the victors after two days brilliant fighting. All the houses were afterwards filled with the conquerors, who required an ample supply of meat, bread, &c. The soldiers gave less trouble than the officers, who required more attention. This proved a great tax on the resources of the inhabitants, all trade being naturally at a standstill.

We laid in a store of fresh meat, &c., and fruit

here, as the country we were going through was getting wilder, and we should not be able to replenish our larder till we arrived at Cambrai; and we might find a detention at the tunnels that we had before us.





CHAPTER XI.

TUNNEL OF TRONQUAY—UNEXPECTED BARRIER TO OUR PROGRESS—A MILE OF BARGES—ACCIDENT TO A BARGE—CURIOUS AND EXCITING SIGHT—DREAD OF THE TUNNEL—POWERFUL SYSTEM OF TOWAGE—NAVIGATION OF TUNNELS—A DAY OF LOCKS AND BRIDGES—ALTERCATION WITH MASTERS OF BARGES—BATEAUX ACCÉLÉRÉS.

THE started again from St. Quentin at 2.30, and found the locks rather smaller, and the bridges decidedly lower; they being only eleven feet high, there was not much room to spare, and the funnel being very hot, it was not a pleasant article to handle so often. Fisher and Allen devoted themselves to this duty, which required promptness and handiness. After passing four locks, we reached

the first tunnel, that of Tronquay at 4.26; the route was clear and it was not very long, only about three quarters of a mile; so without any hesitation we entered it, the height of the vault being about seventeen feet, thus giving two feet clear above our funnel. It is not a pleasant thing imagining that some stone or other may fall on your head, and though the light was visible as a speck at the other end, it was as dark as possible after we had entered a few yards. The large mast-head light was placed in the extreme bows of the vessel, and a hand on each bow held a light directed against the walls; but when a tunnel is quite straight, and it is possible to see the light of day at the exit, the best guide is to get the edge of the funnel in one position against the light, and keeping it there steadily, the vessel goes as straight as an arrow. Guiding her in this way, we emerged into the light of day in eleven minutes, without once touching the sides, though there was not much room to spare, the width of the water-channel being only seventeen feet.

When we had steamed a short way on the other side of Tronquay Tunnel, to our horror we saw at

least a kilometre, or five-eighths of a mile, of barges connected together, and all towed by means of the submerged chain, one small tug doing all the work. It was impossible to pass them with safety, so we hooked on behind them and entered into conversation with the owner of the hindmost vessel. He told us that they had been one hour and a half in passing through the tunnel, in which we had been only eleven minutes. It is impossible to go fast on account of the great displacement of the water, the barges taking up nearly all the space occupied by the channel, the water in which is driven bodily forward by the bluff bows of the barges. We found sometimes that, if going too fast, the stern of the steamer would drop and the keel touch the bottom. The pace of a vessel in narrow water is thus regulated absolutely in proportion of her displacement to the dimensions of the canal, the sides and bottom of which are unelastic. The more water driven ahead, the greater the resistance offered to the progress of the vessel, and accordingly the slower the pace.

Three miles ahead was the long tunnel of Riqueval, which the men in the barges expected to be

six hours in going through. Formerly there was a lock between the two tunnels, but this has been removed of late years. At each bend in this part of the canal there is a campshed of wood, with strong beams to resist the lateral pressure of the barges, which glide along it when rounding the curves. It was a curious sight to see the line of barges extending out of sight, slowly moving and twisting like a snake round the corners. We grew very impatient, but it was of no use, and in about an hour shouts all down the line made each barge-man look out so as not to damage the rudder of the one ahead, the foremost vessels having arrived at the station near the tunnel, another long string of barges coming in the opposite direction being now under ground in the tunnel, and having to pass all those behind which we were.

Night had now come on ; it was pitch dark and raining hard, and were we to remain where we were, we might, too, have to pass six hours in the bowels of the earth, with the atmosphere in a charming state, from the smoke of the tug steamer, to say nothing of the thirty odd fires of the

barges moving slowly behind it. I quickly made up my mind to pass them all, and become the leading vessel instead of the hindmost, as we ascertained that the descending barges were still in the tunnel, and that they would not pass the others until daybreak. Our lights were lit again, and with Miller in the bows to keep a good lookout, we gradually passed them all, and reached the entrance of the tunnel, mooring the 'Ytene' just ahead of all, but within the shelter of the foremost vessel, which we could do, as the barges were of such great beam.

Suddenly, at about nine o'clock, we heard a great outcry in the tunnel, and men came running along the towing path, asking us if we had a pump. We said yes, several, but not moveable; and they explained that one of the barges had struck violently against a stone in the side of the tunnel and had been stove in, and there was great fear lest she should sink in the tunnel itself with the two hundred and seventy tons of coal with which she was laden. This was a pretty state of things, and we soon thought that our route to Belgium would be barred for weeks, and that we

might have to retrace our way back again. The tug steamer soon, however, emerged from the arch, and came to a standstill when three or four barges were out of the tunnel. It was the first that was injured, and she was already sunk in the water to within three or four inches of the gunwale.

Long planks were soon put out to the shore, and a crowd of excited Frenchmen assembled, each with a large galvanised iron pump borrowed from the barges behind us. They were all soon at work pumping, and I returned to the 'Ytene' to fetch A——, to endeavour to comfort the poor women and children that had been landed with bundles of clothes, &c., as they were afraid that the barge might go down. It was a curious and exciting sight, all those collected together having large lanterns with them; loud and hurried orders being heard from those in charge; the poor women and children, with their cat, huddled together on the bank of the canal, crying and lamenting bitterly as the sinking barge, with all its furniture, was their home and property.

I ordered my men to go on board and assist at

the work, and at last, after great exertions, it was found that the vessel did not sink deeper in the canal, and after some time the pumps, increased in number, began to gain on the water, and the hole was discovered on her starboard bow. There had been formerly a towing path on each side of the tunnel; but it being found that the water space was not wide enough, that on the left hand was cut away, but leaving rough stones and projections; against one of which the unfortunate vessel had struck, being towed at too rapid a pace by the tug. Some plank and nails were obtained, and I contributed cotton waste, and after some work the leak was stopped. We remained on the scene of action until the women returned to their vessel; their bedding, however, having got quite soaked with the water. After the danger had passed, to cheer themselves, they began to tell fearful stories of accidents on the canal, and of various friends of theirs having been drowned.

It was half-past twelve o'clock before we turned in, the occurrence that had just happened not tending to cheer us, or to make more pleasant

the prospect of going through the tunnel, which was nearly four miles long, and the sides of which were not as smooth as one could wish. The alarum was set to wake us up at five o'clock, as it was important to have steam ready to start as soon as the barges came out of the tunnel, where they had been the last fourteen hours. When the tunnel was first made, nothing would induce the men working the barges to use it, so great was their dread of it; but a reward offered by the administration, to free the first barge that went through it from tolls for ever, soon brought forward a volunteer, whose barge is still in use, and in a good state, though it has been so repaired from time to time that probably little of the old vessel remains. While waiting to enter, Allen let one of the screws that secure the side lights fall overboard between the vessel and the bank, and he had the pleasure of an early bath to endeavour to find it; but we had to leave it behind at the bottom of the canal.

Soon after daylight, country women came to this rendezvous with milk and butter to sell, and those who had lent pumps came in search of them,

and found them on the bank opposite the damaged vessel, the owner of which was very calm over his trouble the night before, as the damage is paid by the insurance which all are compelled to effect on their vessels by the freighters of goods.

Exactly at 6.15 a.m., the tug started, and it was one hour before the last of the twenty-nine loaded barges passed us. It was wonderful to see the power given by this system of towage, no less than seven thousand eight hundred and thirty tons of coals, besides twenty-nine huge barges, being drawn steadily along by a little vessel with engines of twenty horse power. In all matters of inland navigation the French are certainly far before our country.

As soon as we had passed all the vessels, we lit our lamps, got under weigh, and almost immediately were in the utter darkness of the tunnel, which was so long that there was no trace of light at the other end. I think there must have been a slight curve at the entrance, for almost immediately we were grazing against the left side, which was the rough one, the other being worn quite smooth. I at once landed Miller on the towing

path, that is on the right side, and fastening a light line to our bow, gave the other end to him, of just such a length as allowed the 'Ytene' to be in the centre of the channel; and as it pulled or slackened, so he called port or starboard, and we steadily steamed on our dark way, going as fast as he could walk. The distance was marked at every hundred metres, and at No. 29 the light spot, very small however, became visible at the other end. Cheering it was to see it, and we were enabled to go straighter and faster; in fact, as rapidly as Miller could run along the foot-path.

The air was very bad at first with the smoke of the barges, but there are, in the whole distance, four air-shafts leading up to the surface of the hill, and after the first one the air became better. We looked up as we passed, and saw the light clearly above us. The spot of light, in the form of an arch, gradually grew larger and larger, and at 8.30 we emerged from the tunnel, very delighted at passing through it so well.

The larger the vessel, the more difficult it is, and, of course, the slower you are compelled to go.

In the 'Cicada,' in 1869, I passed the Mauvages tunnel, which is four thousand metres long, in thirty-seven minutes; but now the Riqueral tunnel, five thousand six hundred and seventy metres long, took me seventy minutes. Over the arch of the tunnel was an inscription, informing us that it was constructed by the Emperor Napoleon; commenced in 1802, and finished in 1810.

At Maquincourt, one kilometre from the exit, we halted to purchase a few more coals, as our bunkers were nearly empty. They were very bad and dear here, so we only took in seven and a half hundredweight. It was indeed a day of locks and bridges, as we passed through fifteen of the former, and had an altercation or two with the masters of barges, who wanted us to wait for them to pass the locks first. This would never have done, and in some cases I had the gates shut, and the locks filled with water, without the barge below taking its turn; for now we were descending, having been ascending for some days.

We did not stop to-day at dusk, but with our port and starboard lights, and a bright light in our bows, kept going on till 8.30, passing two or three

bateaux accélérés, which by special authorization are allowed to go all night, with very strong lights, good for themselves, but so dazzling to other boats that it is impossible to see anything on account of the strong reflexion.

At Noyelles, the last lock before Cambrai, the lockman was in bed, and when he was roused up he came out grumbling; but when he heard we were English, he brightened up, put his arm in mine, and marched me up and down the lockside, asking all about our travels, and telling me with great glee that he had a son who could talk English, and was therefore sure to make his fortune. We moored above the port at Cambrai very tired, having had a long, wearisome, and exciting day of real toil; our minds had been on the stretch since five o'clock in the morning.





CHAPTER XII.

THE SCHELDT—RIQUERAL—STATUE OF BAPTISTE—STRONG FORTIFICATIONS—CHATEAU DE SELLES—AN OLD CURIOSITY SHOP—PURCHASES—AMUSING CONVERSATION WITH A BARGE-OWNER—BOUCHAIN—SMITH OF LIVERPOOL'S STEAM FLOUR-MILLS—SCENE OF INDUSTRY—PASSING THROUGH LOCKS—VALENCIENNES—VANDALISM.



WE had now finished with the Canal de St. Quentin, which, after the Riqueral Tunnel, is supplied with water from the River Scheldt, here only an infant stream, the size of a ditch, not being large enough for navigation until it reaches Cambrai, when the canal proper enters it. The country we had been passing through the last day or two was very monotonous, consisting of enor-

mous fields, all growing the sugar-beet, which women and men were now pulling and loading into huge waggons and barges to convey to the mills.

We spent the next morning in the town, which from the earliest ages seems to have been a place of great strife and contention; it is celebrated as the bishopric of Fénélon. The Grande Place is of great extent, and we noticed the statue of Baptiste, the inventor of the material known by ladies as *batiste*, or cambric, of which there are many manufactories in the town. In the churches were splendid examples of old carved oak work, for which the north of France and Belgium is so famed. The town is very strongly fortified; the citadel, which is situated on the east of the town, on the Mont des Bœufs, being of great size.

We started again at one o'clock, the river going right between the walls of the fortifications, which appear to be of enormous extent, though it is doubtful if the old bricks of which the walls are made would stand much battering with the heavy siege guns of the present day. On the north of the town is the Château de Selles, which dates

from the fifteenth century, and some part of which is attributed to the time of the Romans. It consists of five very strong towers joined by curtains to the ramparts. There is a stone division in the middle of the river near the bridge. The ascending traffic goes on one side, and the descending on the other. It is as well to keep a look-out for these, especially when it is dark, for they might occasion great injury ; as we ourselves experienced, when, going round a corner we very nearly ran right into one of them.

Seeing a coal-store close to the lock at Selles, I bought some more coals there, and in the house of the woman who sold them I found quite a curiosity shop, filled with engravings, pictures, china, &c., belonging to her father, a Frenchman of quite the old school, and most courteous in his manners. He amused himself by attending sales in the country, but he was very shy of selling his treasures, fearing that his customers might get some object of vertu at too low a price. I managed, however, to buy one of the real old silver tops of the velvet bags in use quite two hundred years ago, and now again come into fashion. I suggested

as a method of fixing the price, the weighing of the silver in scales against francs. I also bought a very old and early edition of Fénelon's "Télémaque" and La Fontaine's "Fables."

The locks are larger on the Scheldt, and the sills project twelve feet from the gates. Care must be taken to keep away from these when descending. The champignons, to make fast warps to, are sometimes on one side of the lock, and sometimes on the other. We saw nothing but beet in all directions again, with enormous sugar works. The price of the beet is from twenty to twenty-two francs a ton. At Thun l'Evêque the people seem very poor, and for nearly the first time they began to beg for alms.

A mile-post here told us we were only sixty-three kilometres from Mons, and two hundred and eighty-five from Paris. We had a long detention at d'Iwuy, on account of the number of barges, and we had a most amusing conversation with the owner of one of them, who had been at Pontoise when the dreadful hurricane, of which I described the result, took place. The hailstones, he said, were as large as one's fists, the branches of the

trees were flying in all directions, there were waves on the river as on the sea, the thunder and lightning were terrific, and the horses were forced into the river. He also told us that, if we descended the Scheldt, it was necessary to take a pilot from Tournay.

At the junction of the Canal de la Sensée, on the left side, there is a very peculiar and large round basin of the same diameter as the length of the locks, to allow barges to intercommunicate. By taking this canal you can descend to Dunkerque, down the River Aa. We brought up just below the lock and bridge of Malin. The coals we had bought proved so bad that we could hardly keep the steam up, and we were compelled to keep our fires banked, as it would have been impossible to light them up again, and to get steam in the morning with them. Poor Fisher was in despair, and did not know what to do to get them to burn.

We started (October 2nd) at 6.30, and found, when we turned out, that we were close to Bouchain, an old town of the ninth century. Baudouin IV., and his son, Baudouin V., Counts of

Hainault, fortified the town and built a castle there, the only part of which still in existence is the lower story of the Tour d'Ostrevent, which is now used as an artillery magazine. The fortifications and earthworks are very strong, and the country can be easily flooded in case of need by means of sluices. The towing-path is carried on piles outside the walls of the fort, and there is another little stone pier in the centre of the river, which we nearly fouled.

At Neuville we had to wait a long time, as it took thirteen minutes to haul a barge out of the lock, though four horses and several men were engaged in the task. This is a busy part of the country, and, being near the coal mines, coal is cheap, and factories are seen at intervals all along the canal. At d'Houlchin were the large steam flour-mills, worked by Mr. J. Smith, of Liverpool, who is said to have made a large fortune by them. When passing one of the coal dépôts, we inquired the price of coal, and found it was from twenty-two to twenty-five francs a ton. At Trith we got into the neighbourhood of ironworks and brick-fields; in fact, between here and Valenciennes, it is a

continued scene of industry. We remarked one place in particular where very large blast furnaces were being built, and long rows of cottages for the workmen; on the first house of the new works was, "*Enterprise Ant. Fortier.*" There was a tramway running down to it, and M. Fortier must be laying out a great deal of money, but it is to be hoped that his enterprise will have every success.

We were glad to make fast alongside the bank at 12.30, after six hours' work, and passing nine locks, which we were beginning to regard as mere nothings. We certainly horrified the lockmen by running in rather fast, close to the side in which were the champignons. Allen would jump out as soon as we passed the gates, throw the end of the warp over the post, while I gave a turn astern, bringing the vessel up just at the right place. In the meantime, the head warp being made fast, the lockmen would shut one gate, and Allen the other. As soon as the water had lowered and the gates were opened, off we would go, not taking more than ten minutes if the lock was ready for us to go into it. We

were fortunate enough never to have had any mishap in passing through so many locks.

We had stopped just after passing the bridge below the lock at Valenciennes, called Notre Dame, close to which was an entrance to the town, through the fortifications over a drawbridge, the paved roadway going through the Faubourg de Paris, and the gate of the town called the Porte de Paris. To reach this Faubourg from our vessel, we had to pass through marble works, where immense blocks of white and coloured marble were being cut into slabs. A bargeman, seeing we were strangers, kindly offered to show us the nearest route to the town, and afterwards put Miller in the way of procuring what stores he required at the nearest shops. It was raining in torrents, but with waterproofs and umbrellas we wandered over the town, which was already prepared with booths, &c., for the fair, the chief day of which would be on Sunday. The Grande Place, which is of great extent, was quite covered with these erections, which were filled with goods of all kinds, for these fairs are serious business undertakings, at which a large amount of trade is transacted,

pleasure and amusement, of course, having their due share. We went into the Church of Saint-Géry, built by Jeanne of Flanders in 1225. It was lamentable to see the old columns of the nave and chancel ruined by unsuccessful attempts to paint them in such a way as to give them the appearance of marble, the capitals being coloured red and blue. We actually saw the very painters perpetrating this vandalism.

In the Museum we noticed, among other things, a large engraving representing the grand attack on Valenciennes by the Duke of York, on the 25th June, 1793. The manufacture of lace in this town was of great note before the Revolution, but it is now so scarce that it can hardly be obtained. It has been attempted to revive this industry, but with little success; other fabrics having now taken its place, such as batistes and linens. There are also large sugar-works and distilleries, iron-works and foundries, &c.

Valenciennes, under its own Counts, fought successfully against the Normans in the latter half of the ninth century; it was afterwards united to Hainault, whose Counts, John II. and his

son, William III., also Counts of Holland, were buried here in the first half of the fourteenth century. Froissart, so well known by his chronicles, was born here, and a statue was erected to his memory in 1856; a street and a garden also are called by his name. The weather was so bad that we retreated to the steamer in despair, losing our way in doing so, wandering round by the railway station, the streets and roads being ankle deep in mud.

We started again at 3.40. The canal passes right through the immensely strong fortifications of the citadel, the walls of which were very high, with the date 1621 cut in large figures on the stone. The greater part of these works was built by Vauban, on the remains of the ancient castle, which also was very strong. At the present time it is considered a fortress of the first class. The rain soon left off, but it blew a gale from the southward, and right behind us. This proved most annoying when there was any delay at the locks or bridges. At one of the latter we were kept ten minutes, no one appearing or answering to our steam-whistle.

Three locks more brought us at last to Condé, where we arrived at 6.20. We steamed right into the town, and moored alongside the wharf. Here is the junction with the canal to Mons, under a large swing bridge on the right; the route down the Scheldt to Tournai being under the iron bridge. Our coal just lasted us till we got here; but we were able to replenish our bunkers by buying some coal and coke at the gas-works, which were only on the other side of the quay.

We took a walk round the little frontier town, but soon returned; and all forward turned in at eight o'clock, very tired. We followed their example after writing up the journal; for the boisterous wind and weather caused extra fatigue, the usual lock-work being hard enough by itself, as each one has a bridge just below it, which of course necessitates the lowering of the funnel.

The fortifications of this town are considered among the most remarkable of France, and it is a great addition to their strength that the surrounding country can be placed easily under

water. The town is only three miles and a-half from the frontier of Belgium, and has from the earliest ages been the scene of constant warfare. In the ninth century it was ravaged by the Normans, who were at last driven away by the neighbouring Counts of Mons; but in 1174, having offended their protectors, the castle was rased to the ground, and the town burnt by Baudouin de Mons, Count of Hainault.

After a long war with Spain, which then possessed Flanders, this town was ceded by the treaty of Nimeguen to France, that country thus becoming possessed of a great part of the old province of Hainault, which, in 1416, had, by a long intrigue carried on for two generations, fallen into the hands of Philip, misnamed the Good, Duke of Burgundy, and through that house into the power of Charles V.





CHAPTER XIII.

CONDÉ—THE FORTIFICATIONS—THE TOWN EN FÊTE—
BARGE-BUILDING YARDS—THE HAYNE—LOCKS OF THIVEN-
CELLE—THE FRONTIER OF FRANCE AND BELGIUM—APPEAR-
ANCE OF THE COUNTRY—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE—
CURIOSITY EXCITED AT OUR APPEARANCE—MARIEMONT—
MONS—LAKE OF THE APOSTLES—ANCIENT LEGEND.

SUNDAY, 3rd October, was indeed a day of rest, in a small town, with nothing to see, the church even being small and of late date. While waiting for breakfast, I went for a short walk, and my steps led me to the strongest part of the fortifications. The Arsenal is the oldest and quaintest building in the town; it has a very large, isolated, grey tower, the roof being in the

form of a lantern, which is connected, by means of a wall, with two other large stone towers with conical roofs, between which is an arched gateway. The gate on the road to Mons, by the side of the canal, is very quaint-looking, with double drawbridges, as also have all the town-gates. A sentinel on guard told me that there were only two hundred soldiers, and two troops of cavalry, in the place. The chief fortifications consist of earthworks, which are of vast thickness.

The town was *en fête* to-day, and streams of men, with long bows in their hands and quivers by their sides, kept pouring in. It was rather ludicrous to see quite elderly men thus equipped, but it is an old custom in these parts to come and shoot at wooden birds at the top of a very high pole, which can be raised by ropes like the topmast of a ship. They shoot from below, and if a bird is brought down, a prize is given according to its colour and position. Hundreds were shooting all day long, but as not one bird fell, the exercise cannot be as easy as it appears. A notice, issued by the Mayor, for-

bade the presence of all small children or women on the ramparts, where this sport was going on.

Another game was played in the Place Verte. A long oval of eighty yards was marked out with whitewash, divided by a line in the centre. This game was called *jette balle*, and was played with five on each side, under the direction of captains and umpires. One of the players would jerk a small and very heavy ball, an inch and a quarter in diameter, to the other end, and the other side had to hit it back with their hands, which were guarded with oval leathern cups sown on gloves. It was thus hit backwards and forwards, and as it fell so the score was marked. Seats were placed all round the ground, and the greatest excitement was shown by the spectators, the game being played by a neighbouring town against Condé. One match lasts four Sundays. Little Lill thought it great sport, and ran after the ball on one occasion, to the great delight of all looking on.

A very clever fishing net, made on the system of an eel trap with side traps and two wings to

extend across the river, was set every night with great success. I went to the fisherman's house on the opposite side of the river to inspect it, and he explained the working of the net to me. I greatly pleased him by doing some of his net, which he was making in two ways, and tied the knots as he did, which he evidently thought most clever on my part, as it was a great secret known only to few. In the afternoon we walked along the canal leading to Mons, in order to see the barge-building yards, of which there are many close to the town. They are built in large places, dug out sufficiently deep to allow vessels to float when water is admitted by means of a sluice in the bank of the canal, wide enough to give them egress when finished. They are perfectly flat-bottomed, and are not built as strongly as one would think advisable, considering the heavy burden they carry. Oak planking of an inch and a quarter is used for the sides, and a trifle thicker for the bottom; the ribs are very close together in the bows and stern, which are wonderfully bluff and square. The cabins, of which there are two in each vessel, are roomy and commodious, and when nicely fitted up

with good furniture, as many of them have, they look most comfortable. The value of a new one of the best construction, to carry two hundred and seventy tons, with a full equipment of warps, poles, mast, hatches, &c., is about £600.

At 8.30 on Monday morning we put on steam again. It was raining hard, but off we went, backing astern, with the helm hard a-starboard, which brought our bows straight to enter the lock prepared for us. Instead of descending, as we had been doing on the Scheldt, we had to ascend the Hayne, which has certainly lost all the appearance of a river. We had no more trouble with lowering the funnel, for all the bridges were on the swinging principle, and so nicely balanced that a child could by hanging on to the long beams lift them up, a chain depending from the ends of the beams for this purpose. The country here was all grassland, in which were numerous cattle and some strong-looking horses. Cottages were very few in number, the people, evidently from the experience of centuries, finding it safer to live within the shelter of the fortifications, in case any war should arise.

We went through the Lock of Thivencelle, which was the last in France. At 9.20 we passed a swing-bridge and were in Belgium. The only apparent objects to mark the division between the two countries were two places of refreshment, or public houses, one on each bank. At the next lock a Douane officer came to have a look at us, and I gave him a glass of wine, with which he drank our health. The Belgian receiver of tolls furnished us with a *laissez passez*, here called *permis*, for Mons, for which we paid twopence. He had a collection of stuffed birds, and was very pleased when he saw I knew their names, which I told him in English, adding that in my youth I had taken pleasure in collecting and stuffing them. When he came to see us off, he said that "when I had done with the yacht he would not mind having her." At 10.35 we passed on our left the entrance to the Canal d'Antoing, which was made to enable vessels from the Belgian coalfields to reach the Scheldt without going through a small piece of France; thus avoiding delay from the Douane and the French tolls.

The banks were higher here, and we could see

in Belgium already a change in the aspect of the country, which appeared very rich with farms, many churches and spires showing in the distance. After the next lock, by name Herbière, there was at least a mile and a half of barges lining each bank; the descending ones, full of coals, being towed at a snail's pace by one or two men—women, and even children, were to be seen at this work. The favourite colour of the houses was yellow; they were smaller too and with more windows than in France. It was curious to notice how many more small children were running about than in the latter country.

We were soon put out with the language, as the Flemish bargemen could speak but little French. I tried hard to remember a little Dutch that I had picked up during a boating tour in Holland, but could hardly remember a word. We could not understand the custom of making hay at this period of the year. In some parts they were even cutting the grass, and we saw quantities in small cocks in various places, looking quite black. Ours was the first English vessel ever seen in these waters, and the first steamer. Our steam whistle was unknown

on the water, and all the shrieking in the world was of no avail to induce the men to come out of their houses to open the bridges for us, which was rather trying, as the wind was so high that it blew us against the banks as soon as we stopped at such obstacles. We were most amused to see the way all work was suspended at the coal wharfs, and even some hundreds of yards inland, all running as hard as they could to the bank to see the unusual sight. The lock Chinose was mobbed with people when we went through, and much amusement was caused, when a crowd of heads were collected together trying to look down into the engine room, by suddenly lifting the safety valves a little or blowing the whistle, when all would draw back, tumbling over one another.

We were considered so well worth looking at that a young woman rushed out of one house with nothing but a short linen garment on, thrown very loosely round her shoulders, holding up her gown that she had hurriedly snatched up to her neck. Her appearance in the strong wind afforded quite as much amusement to our men as we gave her.

The coal brought by trams from the mines is stored under enormous sheds, a much better plan than that of allowing it to deteriorate by letting rain and sunshine fall on it; but these are only used when there is not much demand for the article. At present the sheds were all empty, and barges had to wait long turns for their freights.

After this lock there was no more traffic to speak of, and tall rushes grew on each side of the canal-like river, which was quite straight. Facing us was the town of Mons on an elevation, from whence its name. We also could see the old wall under the site where the castle once stood, and the Cathedral of St. Waudru and the old Beffroi. At the last lock we had to go through, the slowest man I ever saw made his appearance to open it; but this even gave pleasure to a few, for some young people, with their parents, came out of a large and well-kept house to have a look at us. There was a sugar-mill close by, the property of the father of the young family.

Three o'clock saw us moored alongside a wharf, ahead of two barges, waiting to go into the basin

on the other side of a swing bridge, to load Mariemont coal, which is the best in Belgium, and quite equal to our best Welch steam-coal. Where we were was a large round piece of water, very deep in the centre, in which some young people from the town amused themselves with boats.

This round and deep piece of water has been called "The Lake of the Apostles," from the following legend, for which I am indebted to a book called, "Catholic Legends and Traditions." This legend I have compared with old chronicles of Hainault, collected by the Reverend Doctor of Divinity, Jacobus Guisius, who died in the year 1398. He confirms many of the details of this reign, which I give with some extracts from the legend.

About the year 880, A.D., Reynier, the Long-necked, Count of Mons, was attacked by Rollo the Viking, who, after having ravaged the country of the Frisians, turned his arms against Hainault, in order to revenge the disasters that had a few years previously befallen his countryman, Godefroi; and the brave Reynier victoriously drove him and

his savage followers out of the country with great loss.

Reynier, with his forces, had suffered much in the north of Holland, in consequence of the defeat that the Frisians had sustained, and he had returned home to strengthen his castles and fortresses, and to prepare them against the threatened attack of Rollo and his Northmen. Religious ceremonies were performed in the cathedral at Mons, and Reynier himself carried with bare feet the bodies of those saints that they possessed, and that were esteemed so precious in those times. The relics of St. Waudru were not forgotten, and all were placed in safety, as it was well known that Rollo would not reverence any of these holy remains.

According to their custom, the Norsemen sailed up the River Scheldt, to a point convenient for attacking Reynier, who advanced with his army to Tournai, which he hoped to be able to defend. Albraide, described by Guisius as 'the very noble Countess, and very loyal wife of Reynier,' spent her days and nights weeping and praying in a

small chapel that she herself had built in honour of the Twelve Apostles.

Many were the combats waged day by day, in one of which no less than twelve of Rollo's chieftains were captured by Reynier, who immediately sent them for safe keeping to Mons. This victory Albraide caused to be celebrated with a *Te Deum*, in which all left at Mons joined. But alas! forced to retreat to Condé, with the loss of nearly all his forces, Reynier, fighting to the last with a huge battle-axe, was at length obliged to yield to Rollo.

Bitter was the grief of his Countess at the news, and a messenger soon arrived from Rollo demanding not only the twelve Norsemen that had been taken prisoners, but all the gold and silver in Hainault, as well as the possession of the country; and adding that, if these were not immediately given up, Reynier's head would be cut off.

In the agony of the young Countess, she lost her presence of mind, and went out of the castle unattended and alone. With despair in her heart, the wretched Albraide rushed into the open country,

and proceeded in the direction of a deep lake, which lay not far from the city. "Bewildered, miserable, tempted almost beyond her strength, she was already on the brink, and one moment more would have hurried her into eternity. But, suddenly, upon the borders of the lake, rose up before her a venerable man in flowing robes, and leaning on a pilgrim's staff. She turned away to avoid him, when another, like him in appearance, stood before her. Further on, a third appeared, holding rays in his hand; then a fourth, leaning on a Greek cross. Twelve ancient men, marked by different emblems—a scythe, a sword, a palm, and a chalice—surrounded the lake, as if to guard it. The Countess hurried round it again and again, without remarking that the old men were slowly following her; till, at the point where she had first seen the pilgrim with his staff, they all surrounded her, and with one solemn voice addressed her.

"'Albraide, God in His mercy saves you from a fearful sin; a thought is in your heart which you have never offered up to Him; but we have not forgotten you, poor suffering child! Send

back the twelve Norsemen. Return to Mons; do all that the barbarian demands, and you will see your Reynier again.'"

She returned to the castle, delivered the twelve prisoners, told them that they were free, and immediately made arrangements to send Rollo all the gold and silver jewels and the costly ornaments of the country. Though he had demanded them, Rollo never expected the return of his countrymen, and he had not recovered from his surprise at seeing them, when the first waggon containing the gold and silver arrived. The spoils of every palace, church, and castle followed from hour to hour, and last of all arrived the jewels of the young Countess.

So delighted and touched was Rollo at the devotion of Albraide that he immediately freed Reynier, and insisted on accompanying him to his castle, that he might be presented to Albraide, to whom he promised to return her treasures.

Guisius relates that Albraide said to Rollo, "It pleases me well, if it pleases my husband, that you have *all that you ask for his ransom*, for

I love rather to be poor with his safety and health."

Though Rollo did not return all, he forgave half the ransom of gold and silver, and allowed Reynier to keep his lands, and when he went away promised to maintain "a perpetual peace and an eternal friendship." In memory of the Countess's vision the lake in which we were moored at Mons has ever since been named *The Lake of the Apostles*.





CHAPTER XIV.

HALF OF OUR JOURNEY FINISHED—CATHEDRAL OF ST. WAUDRU
—CURIOUS PAINTING—CLOCK AND CARILLON—CURIOUS OLD
MANUSCRIPTS—JACQUELINE OF HOLLAND—EXTRACTS FROM
THE OLD CHRONICLES—MISTAKEN POLICY OF HENRY V. OF
ENGLAND—SUCCESSFUL INTRIGUES OF THE DUKE OF BUR-
GUNDY.



WE considered that we had now finished the first half of our journey, having gone two hundred and ten miles since leaving Paris, which had taken us ten working days to accomplish, not a bad result considering the number of locks and bridges, to say nothing of the tunnels and detention by barges; the time of year too being against us as the days were so short. At each town we had spent some

hours, and should have wished to stay longer had the season allowed it, but it was necessary to remember that we had to get from Ostend or Calais back to the Isle of Wight, and in the end of October or November the bad weather might prove a great obstacle.

October 5.—Though so close to the town, the large Railway station intervened, which made a detour of three-quarters of a mile necessary, so we asked permission from the *chef de la gare* to cross the line at the station. This he granted in the kindest way, sending a man with us and giving orders that every attention should be paid to us. This was a great convenience and saved us many a dirty walk.

We were very pleased with the cathedral called after St. Waudru, who was Comtesse de Mons and Hainault, and died in the year 681 A.D. She built and endowed the old church, which with the town was burnt in the thirteenth century. It formerly belonged to a semi-conventual establishment for ladies of noble birth, who devoted half their days to religious and the other half to secular pursuits, and who were allowed to marry.

The interior of the present church, built in 1450, is very bold and elegant, the clustered columns forming the bases for slender ribs that spring up and form a network under the roof. There is a great deal of fine old painted glass, with the coats of arms of Hainault, Flanders, and Burgundy. There are also many interesting tombstones of the old families of this province.

I found in the church a very old and most interesting painting of some size, of the genealogy and portraits of the old Counts of Mons, connected together in the form of a tree, with short accounts in unreadable characters under the portrait of each. I could get no history of this painting, which required more study than I could give, as it hung rather high up in a dark position.

We ascended the belfry, whence we could perceive the 'Ytene' in the canal below, surrounded by people. We noticed that she had already set her masts up, as we proposed to stay two or three days at Mons. The straight river or canal extended as a line to the horizon. The Beffroi is close to the site where Cæsar's castle was built, being a little below the highest level of the hill; this is now

occupied by the reservoir of water for the use of the town, which is brought by pipes from high ground at some little distance.

The clock in the Beffroi is very old, and requires great attention, it being necessary to wind it up three times a day. The watchman's wife does so during the day, and he at night, often sleeping in a small bed at the top of the tower. The carillons consist of thirty-six bells, the largest of which weighs thirty-six thousand pounds, as we were told.

The only part left of the mediæval castle forms the entrance to the ground, laid out as gardens, under which the water is kept in the reservoir, the top being covered and grassed over. The arms of the town are a castle with a lion sitting in the gateway. We then paid a visit to the town library, where we found a curious old manuscript volume, date 1620, which gave the history and genealogy of the Counts of Hainault, from St. Waudru, 630, to Jacqueline de Mons, Comtesse of Hainault and Holland, who was forced to yield all her sovereign possessions to Philip, Duke of Burgundy. I also

found a manuscript genealogy of the Counts of Châtillon and Blois, of about the same date, which went up to the year 1067. The lineal descendants of this race now live in the south of France, and one of them was some thirty years ago, member for Finisterre.

Poor Jacqueline was the greatest heroine of the turbulent ages in which she lived, and her fate was the pivot on which the history of the greater part of Europe turned. Had she not been robbed of her possessions by the Duke of Burgundy, that line would never have risen to the power which it attained; Mary, the daughter of the last Duke of that race, Charles the Bold, who was overthrown and killed near Nancy, would not, by her marriage with Maximilian, the son of the Emperor of Austria, have brought the titles and provinces of Flanders, Hainault, Brabant, Holland, Zealand, Luxembourg, Limburg, and Namur into that family, and consequently their descendant, the Emperor Charles V, would never have had the power by which he succeeded in subduing and holding his vast possessions. The indiscretions of a young lady can rarely in

the world's history, have had such consequences, and have led to so much misery.

The history of the last ruler of the old race of Hainault is so interesting that, though it has been made the subject of many historical novels, and even dramas, I am induced to give a short account of the troubles she fell into, through the intrigues that were woven around her house while she was still unborn.

The Dukes of Burgundy, wanting to enlarge their possessions at the expense of their neighbours, and having no chance of doing so on the side of France, thought it better policy to attempt by craft what they were not then strong enough to do by force of arms. Philip the Bold married the only daughter and heiress of Louis, Count of Flanders, and on his death in 1384, became possessed of this, the first province of the Netherlands, which all in less than forty years fell under the rule of this ambitious family. His son John married Marguerite, the eldest daughter of Albert I., Count of Hainault and Holland; this latter was succeeded by his son, William VI., who died in 1417, leaving only one child,

our heroine, Jacqueline, whose guardian and uncle was John, the only brother of William VI. This John was persuaded to become the Bishop of Liége, a dignity which was offered him, although he was not in priest's orders. Seeing how near he was to the succession, he prudently refused to be ordained, though loath to give up the emoluments of the bishopric.

John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, soon came to an untimely end, being murdered in 1419, at Montereau, in the presence of the Dauphin, who had invited him to come there to arrange a campaign against the English, who under our Henry V. were at this time over-running the whole north of France. Philip the Good, the son of John and Marguerite, then became Duke of Burgundy. He and John, the Bishop of Liége, caused Jacqueline, now Countess of Hainault and Holland, though only seventeen years old, to marry her cousin the Duke of Brabant, a young man as weak in mind as he was contemptible in person. After marriage she refused to live with him, and it was pretended that the Pope had by a Bull disallowed the mar-

riage, in consequence of their being within the prohibited degrees of relationship, and no dispensation having being obtained.

Jacqueline went to England and was well received by King Henry, who promised her protection. She soon married Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the brother of the King, who had fallen in love with her, she being very pretty, witty, and accomplished. John the Bishop was truly nicknamed *sans pitié*, when he allowed his niece and ward thus headlong to rush into destruction.

Brabant, of course, made war on Hainault immediately, and the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester soon went to Flanders to protect their provinces. John the Bishop, who had hoped by the intrigue to become Count of Hainault, and who had married the widow of the Duke of Brabant's father, a princess to whom the Duchy of Luxembourg had fallen by the death of the Duke John, she being his only child, now met with his deserts. He died suddenly, being poisoned, according to report by the Duke of Gloucester, who thus, as he thought, removed all obstacles

from his path, and proclaimed himself Count of Hainault, Holland, &c.

The Pope Martin now thought it time to send to Hainault, and to denounce the Bull, on which poor Jacqueline had acted, as a forgery. He further declared the marriage with the Duke of Gloucester null and void; and added that, if the Duke of Brabant should die, the said Duke of Gloucester and the Countess Jacqueline could not be legally married to each other at any time.

Piteous were the letters of Jacqueline to the Duke of Burgundy and all her friends, and furious was her wrath. The Duke of Gloucester denounced the Duke of Burgundy as a liar, and everything that was bad, and by his own arrangement fixed on St. George's day to combat him according to the custom of those times. His troops, however, having been beaten with great loss at Braine-le-Comte, near Mons, and finding the Hainaulters not very warm in his support, he thought the best thing he could do was to retire into England, which he did, parting with Jacqueline "with many tears and lamentations." He never returned to fight

his duel, and was thus disgraced for ever, but consoled himself by going again through the form of marriage with Eleanor de Cobham, who was far below him in station.

Jacqueline, under restraint in Ghent, could not remain quiet, but escaped in the disguise of man's clothing, and soon raised an army, but was vanquished everywhere by the Duke of Burgundy, her cousin, who had usurped her titles and possessions; and she, after some time, made a treaty with him, yielding him everything should she die without legitimate heirs—in fact, making him her universal heir. She refused to have anything to do with the Duke of Brabant, her husband, who soon died. The Duke of Burgundy also took that Duchy, after the death of Philip, his brother. Very suspicious were these sudden and untimely deaths of all persons who stood in the way of an ambitious and unscrupulous ruler, who strange to say rejoiced in the name of the "Good."

Jacqueline, thus feeling free, married again to a gentleman of title, but without the consent of Philip the Good, who under the disguise of friend-

ship, inveigled her husband into his power, immediately put him into prison, and threatened to behead him if Jacqueline did not instantly cede all her possessions without reserve. This she did, and under the title of Countess of Ostravant and Lady of Vorn, she retired into Holland and died at the Hague, only thirty-six years old.

Philip then took charge of the destinies of Elizabeth of Luxembourg, the widow of John the Bishop. Her subjects had risen against her, but with the aid of her protector they were soon subdued ; and Philip giving Elizabeth an annuity of five thousand crowns, she ceded her possessions to him by treaty in 1443. Thus did the House of Burgundy, by fraud, murder, and force of arms become possessed of wealth and power.

While reading the old chronicles and histories which so minutely relate the events of those stirring times, it has often struck me what a mistaken policy it was of King Henry V. of England to fight against France, and to be friendly with the Duke of Burgundy. If he had given up his pretensions to the throne of France, which the Pope always told him were vain, and even specially

advised him to abandon, he might, with the aid of the King of France and the Pope, or even with their tacit consent, which he could have gained as a return, have taken advantage of the intrigues of the Duke of Burgundy and easily have become the ruler of the Netherlands. There would then have been no Charles V., and it is difficult to say to how great an extent the map of Europe, as it now exists, would have varied.





CHAPTER XV.

HAINAULT MINES—MALPLAQUET—PUMPING ENGINES—BLATON
—NO RULE WITHOUT EXCEPTIONS—M. DUCHATEAU'S SUGAR
FACTORY—MANUFACTURE OF SUGAR FROM BEET-ROOT—IM-
PRUDENT DRAWBACK—OLD CHURCH—VISIT TO THE BURGO-
MASTER—TAME CARP—THE WILY DUTCHMAN.

SEPTEMBER 7th.—We had permis-
sion by telegram from the mines to
take in four tons of Mariemont coals
from the wharf close by, where they
were in transit for France, coming by railway and
being shipped into barges. The price was very
moderate, only seventeen and sixpence a ton, and
glad we were to get such an excellent smokeless
coal after the rubbish we had bought in France.

Mons is the centre of a great coal-mining district

and in the town is a very good Government mining-school. The yield of the Hainault mines is from nine to ten millions of tons yearly, out of a total of twelve to thirteen millions for all Belgium. There are often strikes and riots amongst the miners, but it is curious to read in the papers how quickly when the troops appear, and after some miners are killed and wounded, work is soon resumed.

Malplaquet is only three miles to the south-east, where it will be remembered Marlborough and Prince Eugene gained a great victory over the French in 1703, but only with the loss of nearly twenty thousand men. The Duke of York was not so lucky, as near the same place he was defeated by Pichegru in 1794, losing sixty guns and fifteen hundred men. Truly is this country called the cock-pit of Europe. It was now time to be on our travels again, and large was the concourse of people to see us leave, which we did with many farewells at 11.40 on the 7th. Our lazy friend at the lock gave us a *permis*, and we really had a most amusing though slow progress past all the coal depots and barges. We had evidently been the topic of conversation the last few days, and our

steam whistle was attended to as fast as they were able. There was no need of Allen jumping out at the locks; volunteers to do every service there were by dozens, and we were evidently regarded with great favour.

At 3.15 we turned into the Canal d'Antoing on our right, preferring to take that route to returning by Condé, and down the Scheldt by Tournai; though I believe we should have gained two or three days and saved going through dozens of locks had we done so. Soon after we passed a magnificent barge, bright with varnish and paint; the curved and enormous tiller told us at once that it was Dutch, and on the bows was painted a sheep's head. The owner, who was a large barge-owner, and a shrewd, well-educated young man, was on board to test by personal experience, as he said, the route to France, that he might know all about the journey and its expenses when the vessel went again under the charge of one of his men. He spoke a little English, but French he was quite master of.

He was going through the Blaton and Ath Canal like ourselves, preferring the slow and sure route,

as on the Scheldt there are some dangers between Tournai and Ghent, where a pilot is necessary. We parted, as I steamed ahead, good friends, but a day or two afterwards there was a state of war between us, and some danger of a breach of the peace, as will be seen hereafter.

We passed through a fine grazing country, and between locks No. 2 and 3 there was a large wood of young beeches on the right, with the railway running by the side of it, a train slowly going along, leaving a long line of white steam and smoke. Below us on the canal were the vessels with their white sails on their tall masts, and all the people we saw looked prosperous and happy. The day was fine, and everything going well, we had a most pleasant afternoon. At lock No. 3, by name Antoin, are the large pumping engines to supply the canal with water, put up when it was made to provide transport in Belgium for the Mons coal.

The engineer, who also acts as lockman, had read in the paper about our travels, and he proposed that we should land and see the large steam engines which are considered quite worth seeing. They

are Watt's Cornish beam-pumping engines, with five large boilers; the two cylinders are forty-five inches diameter and ten feet stroke. Each stroke pumps one cubic metre of water from a small stream into an aqueduct of six hundred metres long to the centre level; the diameter of the pipe up which it is pumped is fifty inches. The engines pump three days and three nights in a fortnight unless there is much traffic, in which case they work the same time every eight days. It takes seven and a half pounds of steam to start the engines; afterwards, three pounds of steam with the vacuum is sufficient. They give nine thousand strokes every twelve hours when working properly, which are registered by a counter and reported to the *Ingénieur-en-chef* at Mons.

It was getting quite dark when we passed lock No. 5, and half a mile more brought us to the little town of Blaton, opposite to the old church of which is the canal to Ath and the river Dendre, through which we proposed to go. We made a sweep round intending to go through the first lock and bring up on the other side, but as we lowered our funnel to pass under the bridge, which is close

to the lock, we heard a voice say in the quietest and most gentle way, in English, "Stop," and as we were still slowly going a-head, "Stop" in the same way was repeated. Not a word more, and I felt I had better give a turn astern, and find out why we were to stop.

The order was the more mysterious, as it was spoken in English, and in the most gentlemanly way. We were then informed that this canal was a concession, worked by a private company, that one of the rules imposed by Government was that no vessels should go on it under steam, and that unless we liked to be towed through, with our fires out, we could not proceed. I did not like this, as I never yet had been stopped in this way. So after mooring the 'Ytene' next to a barge, I went ashore and asked to see the rules, saying "that there was no rule without an exception, otherwise there was no occasion for the rule."

They were produced by the agent in charge at the lock, who takes the tolls, and I soon spied out Art 40, "To be able to navigate a steamer

upon the canal, or the Dendre, it is necessary to have a special authorization of the Department of Public Works, having previously given notice to the Company that has the concession."

With my finger on this article, which I read to the agent, I said, "Where is the telegraph-office, and who is the *Ingénieur-en-chef* for the district?" The rapidity with which I made up my mind not to be balked struck the poor man aback, and he gasped out,

"To-morrow, to-morrow, there will be plenty of time."

"To-morrow," I repeated after him, "why, to-morrow I shall be miles away, steaming along your canal."

I was backed up, to my delight, by the gentleman who had so softly breathed out "stop" to us; and he, being used to official communications, at once kindly wrote out a telegram to the *Ingénieur-en-chef* at Mons, whose name is M. Morelle, asking permission for my vessel, as a yacht, to traverse the canal.

This was all that could be done that night. The telegram was sent off, and I walked up the

canal to see what it was like. As far as I went there was nothing to be seen but a series of locks, from four hundred to five hundred yards apart.

Early the next morning we met M. Duchâteau, who had been so kind as to help me in my argument with the canal agent the night before; and as the necessary permission had not arrived, we accepted his welcome offer to go over his father's large works for the extraction of sugar from beet-root. This we had much wanted to do, for we had passed so many factories of this nature, and beet is now the staple crop of the north of France and Belgium.

I will shortly describe the process we saw at the works. The red Silesian beet is preferred for the sugar it produces. When the top has been cut off by women, it is thrown into a box which allows it to fall into a rotary washing machine, at the other end, from which the roots come out quite clean; they then go into a cutting or rather pulping machine, and the pulp falls into a vat from which it is taken by an automatic ladle, just holding sufficient with one motion to charge the bags into

which it is squeezed in the presses, a plate being, of course, placed between each bagful. The juice now runs into a large vat, whence it is pumped up into the story above. The pulp, which is quite white, dry, and powdery when the juice has been extracted, is next turned out of the bags, and thrown into a large heap. It is much relished by cattle, and forms their food at this time of the year. The juice is then treated with lime, and heated ; after which carbonic acid gas made below from chalk and sulphuric acid is forced through the liquid. This destroys all the acid in the juice, and at this stage it is tested by the government excise-officers, of whom there are two always on the premises.

The specific gravity of each vatful is taken and registered in a book kept for the purpose, and by referring to a table the amount of duty is at once placed in a column devoted to it.

The juice is next boiled and evaporated, and at last, when quite thick and treacly, it goes into the centrifugal vacuum pan, which throws off all the molasses, and leaves the sugar in grains of a dirty grey colour.

This, of course, now has to go to a refinery, which it leaves in the form of white loaf-sugar, rather softer and of a closer grain than that made from sugar-cane. The refuse dirt and lime from the first process, with the juice, are much valued as excellent manure. The French Government allow a large drawback of duty on all beet-root sugar exported, which is felt very hardly by the Belgian manufacturers, who this year were losing by every pound of sugar they made ; the price of production being enhanced by the watery quality of the roots this season. Our sugar refineries are also suffering much, which is the more annoying as it must be a mistake for the French people to carry the system of protection to such an extent that the retail price of lump sugar of an inferior quality is actually no less than eightpence-halfpenny a pound ; so that the whole sugar-consuming population of France is paying an extravagant price, just the double of what it is in England, in order to benefit the growers of beet and the sugar-makers, the former of whom would be able to make just as much out of their land by growing other crops. It is felt the more in Belgium, because, in

order to secure a sufficient quantity of beet, contracts lasting over a number of years have been made with the farmers. Loud were the groans that we heard in various parts on this subject, and we were assured that one factory which a few years back cost 110,000 frs., lately changed hands for 30,000 frs.

About ten o'clock we received from the *Ingénieur-en-chef* the permit to steam through the canal but subject to the permission of M. Leborazki, the Director at Brussels, to whom I had now to telegraph. While waiting for his reply, I went, accompanied by M. Duchâteau, to see the old church built in the eleventh century. This has one or two round-headed windows, but restorations made in days gone by have taken away most of the traces of antiquity. We then visited the burgo-master at the town-hall, where he and his clerk sit once a week to perform magisterial duties. The small town of three thousand two hundred inhabitants, possesses two schools for the children of the commune, and there is besides an infant school, at both of which the children are said to be well taught.

We then went to call at M. Duchâteau's house, where we were kindly received by his father and the ladies. In a pond in their beautiful garden we saw some enormous carp, which were quite tame, and came up readily on bread being thrown in.

At twelve we entered the canal, and paid three shillings as dues on an empty vessel, our friend the Dutchman having to pay no less than six pounds thirteen shillings on his freight of two hundred and twenty-two tons of coals, which he was taking to Antwerp, having brought pit-proofs from there to the mines, the net profit in the out and home voyages being a thousand francs, and the time occupied two months.

After passing two or three locks, we stopped under a railway bridge to wait for the formal permission of the Director, which in due course was brought to us there. A week or two before, an engine and five waggons had fallen from this bridge into the canal, the engineer and another man being killed. The traces of the accident were still very visible. I did not mention this till after dinner, as I thought that we might have

been requested to move from under such a position, had A—— known it.

Slowly we toiled through the locks behind the lumbering Dutchman, and at 6.30 the man at No. 7 lock would not let us through, saying that there was not enough water, although the barge which had just gone through before us, and had made fast for the night, drew 1.80 metre, and we only 1.42. The water was a little low, and the wily Hollander thought that if he could keep us behind him, it would make a lockful in his favour rising to No. 10, and descending the falling ten locks; and in order to keep ahead he bribed the lockmen, which he could do more easily than I could, being able to talk the language, for here French is not of much use. Nothing would make the lockmen let us through, though I tried the silver key; so at 7.30 I walked on to the locks above, and found that the Superintendent would be coming along the canal at seven the next morning, and I had no doubt that he would put things straight. When I came back, though I had found out his tactics, I had a friendly chat with the Dutchman, as I considered

it the best policy to appear to know nothing about them.

October, 9th. We were up by six, and found that during the night our enemy had placed his barge right across the canal, determined that, if he could not proceed, we should not, there was water enough for us, but about one inch too little for him. The Superintendent arrived at 7.30 on horseback, and immediately ordered four and a-half inches of water to be let through from the lock above, that we might go on without any danger to the barge from getting aground; but as he left immediately to go home to his breakfast, the Dutchman pushed on as soon as there was water enough, and so managed that it was impossible for us to pass, the canal not being wide enough. At lock No. 7, I appealed to the lockman to put in force Article No. 12, which provides that any vessel going faster than another, has a right to pass the slower one.

At last, as the Dutchman stoutly refused to let me pass him, what is called a *procès-verbal* was drawn up by the lockmen, to be sent on

to Ath, so that he might be fined and detained. The Dutchman then got furious, and declared that a hundred *procès-verbaux* should not stop him, and that he would spend all the profit of the voyage rather than let me pass him. He had his way, and worried us till twelve o'clock, though I tried every manœuvre by keeping back and then putting on steam, but he was too wary. By means of the horse and his long poles, he pulled backwards and forwards across our bows, till at last he fortunately got aground, and we passed him just below lock No. 10. I was sadly afraid there would have been some mischief done by a free fight between him and his men and my people, and I had to speak sharply to Miller, when aggravated beyond measure, he was just going to catch the Dutchman a blow with one of our boat-hooks. I found out at last what they wanted. They thought that I would have have paid them to let us pass, and the man with the horse expected ten francs for this.

At No. 7, while we were waiting, some ladies, who were cousins of Monsieur Duchâteau, came


on board, and A—— went and returned the visit at their house. When they came back, they were delighted at being taken as far as the next two locks.





CHAPTER XVI.

PALACE OF THE PRINCE DE LIGNE — CRAFT OF THE BELGIAN
GOVERNMENT — DESTRUCTION OF OLD FORTIFICATIONS —
CHURCH OF ATH — TOUR DE BURBANT — WAGES AND PROVI-
SIONS — THICK-HEADED LOCKMEN — LESSINES — CHURCH OF
GRAMMONT — CHURCH OF ALOST — CONVERSATION WITH A
NATIVE — AUDEGHEM — YERMONDE.

E had now risen the ten locks,
and quite rejoiced at being able
to steam for three miles and a-
half, when another ten locks had to
be passed, but these were descending, and not so
close together as the first ten. Here we met
another Superintendent, to whom we complained
of the treatment we had met with. He said it
should be looked to, and he very kindly counter-

signed our two telegrams, so that we should not have any more trouble.

Lock No. 11 is near Belœil, the seat of the Prince de Ligne, which we should very much have liked to go to see, but the season was so far advanced, that we could not make any unnecessary stoppages. More lucky than many of the old nobles of Hainault, this family has been able to keep possession of its château and estates for more than five hundred years. There are said to be numerous articles of historic interest in the palace, also a large library with many rare MSS., several fine pictures by the old masters, and portraits of more than a hundred Counts and Princes de Ligne. The old English coachman, whom I saw fishing at the lock, told me that the young Princes took the greatest pleasure in all sports, and that they would be very sorry to have missed seeing our vessel while in their neighbourhood.

At lock No. 15, there are large pumping-works to supply water to the canal, and we heard that, the beam of a new compound engine having been broken, all the work fell on another; a circumstance which

accounted for the fact that the water was short in the canal. Very crafty was the Belgian Government when they let this canal to a company, for one half the water they pump up (one square metre a minute), when the engines of one hundred and seventy horse-power are at work, goes through the locks, and helps to fill the Canal Antoin, thus saving the extra pumping necessary on that canal, still in the hands of the State.

There is another pumping station at No. 16, the cost of which, as of the others, is very large. When we entered No. 20, the lockman was very angry, because, as he said, we were going so fast, and were making a wash, and he declared we wanted to cut out some barge. There was a great change in him, however, directly he saw we were not a trading vessel, and he told us that he, too, had been a great traveller, having been to Scotland, Italy, Spain, &c.

Below No. 20 lock are three low bridges, with great turns in the canal which followed the fosse of the old fortifications of Ath, made by Vauban. These fortifications, however, like nearly all in

Belgium, are now levelled to the ground, and all signs of works of defence have utterly disappeared ; the ground where they stood being laid out as promenades, streets, &c. At Mons, Tournay, and most of the towns in Belgium, the same thing has been done, which has brought in a large sum of money to the State ; the sites of these fortifications having been sold for building ground at high prices.

How different was the policy in olden times ! What would Froissart and Monstrelet say, could they rise from their tombs and see those towns and places, so often described by them, open and undefended ? France, on the other hand, carefully preserves all these ramparts and fortifications, which will doubtless some day or other come into use again ; and then Belgium will call on those Powers, who guaranteed her independence to defend her, with a defenceless frontier quite open to the ravages of the enemy.

At six o'clock we moored close to the town, just above where the canal joins the river Dendre, the water of which was very dirty, the sewers of the town falling into it. The church was burnt sixty

years ago, and rebuilt in a very ugly way. The tower, date 1397, which escaped from the conflagration, is very large and massive, and formerly had a spire as tall as the tower itself. The pointed gothic arch of the door is very high. The only thing worth seeing in the town is the old "Tour de Burbant," a most ancient structure, dating from 1150, and the tower is probably much older, as I noticed a doorway of small dimensions, the top of which was formed by a large triangular stone, a circumstance of very rare occurrence.

This old, square, large tower was restored by Vauban, and the outside of the upper part was recovered with large stones. The windows of the tower were renewed, as well as the doors in the other part of the castle, with the exception of the one just mentioned; there are traces to show that before the restoration they were round at the head. The walls are thirteen and a-half feet thick, and the old staircase is built within one of them. The old fire-place and chimney are of enormous size, as are the curious padlocks, which must date back some ages. There is a fine view from the top of the tower, which is worth ascending. On inquiry,

I found that agricultural labourers get two francs a day, but by piece-work they can earn three francs. Meat is about twenty-five per cent dearer than in France.

Having spent a quiet Sunday, the repose of which we quite enjoyed, we started again on Monday morning at 6.50, and found the river below the lock very narrow and winding. A short distance on were some stone quarries on the right, worked at a depth of fifty-five yards from the surface. The stone, which is very hard, is used for paving the streets of towns. The price at the quarry is £5 per thousand, each one being five inches square. It was very cold this morning, and we were glad to make a change to Winter clothing. We felt we were in a network of artificial navigation which seemed endless.

At a lock here the lockman would not let us pass, saying that steam was quite against the rules. I could not get him to see that we could not have dropped from the clouds, and that, unless we had special orders, we could not have got on to the canal at all, to say nothing of passing all the locks and various superintendents, and the General Agent at

Ath. He could not make out the telegrams, which he said were useless, and I had great difficulty in inducing him to open the gates for us. Very thick-headed are some of these small men, and wonderfully different from the lock-keepers in France, who are ever ready to oblige. Nothing, too, could have been more prompt than the kind permissions we had from the *Ingénieur-en-chef* and the Director of the Concession.

At 9.30 we passed through the old town of Lessines, which took part in many of the fights of the old times. The river was very narrow, and the houses were built up from the edge of the water. Several barges were moored here, and the many bridges rendered great care necessary. A little below again was the town of Acren on the left, with its large church. Here also, once more, was the pole all ready with the birds to be shot at with bows and arrows. Overbouldaere town and Railway bridge were now passed, with a range of hills on the right. The river had grown wider, and it was quite a treat to steam along with much longer intervals between the locks. Our speed was limited by our permits to two hundred yards a

minute, which allowed us to go at the respectable pace of seven miles an hour, quite fast enough in these very confined waters, where the depth was about seven feet.

At 11.30 we arrived at Grammont on the right bank, which is on rising ground and is quaint looking. The church, built in the thirteenth century, has two red roofs, one rising over the other, and the tower and spire are in the centre. Although it was raining hard, I could not help going to see it. A flight of steps led up to the entrance, and I was soon attracted to the splendid pulpit of old carved oak, under which was a very fine life-sized statue of Jesus, in polished marble, giving two keys to St. Peter. In this church were buried the remains of Count Egmont, who was so cruelly beheaded by the Duke of Alva. Very few strangers can come to this out of the way place, judging by the amazement of the inhabitants at my appearance in the small town. The lockman here showed us with pride two national certificates granted to him for having saved life from drowning. Just past the town there is an old château with fine willows round it. Could this have been the

residence of Count Egmont, who had property here.

Passing Idegem and Grimmingen with its church and graceful spire, we came to Port Santbergen, just below which there is a very old and large square castle, with ruined towers at each corner. I counted ten windows in one side of it. There is a mound in front planted with fir trees. The country was very rich here, and there were many cattle in the fields. Near the large straggling town of Pollacre there are large hop gardens, and some of the hops were yet unpicked. At Denderleeuw and the lock of Alost we saw many anchors and boats, leeboards, &c., left by the barges to avoid paying toll by weight.

We now saw on our left the splendid and large church of Alost, where we arrived at 4.15, and grieved we were that the desire to get to Termonde by dusk prevented us going to see it. Had the building, commenced in 1498 after the old church was burnt, been completed, it would have been the largest and finest church in Belgium. The effect from a distance is very fine, on account of the height of the nave and transept. There are two Railway

bridges here, which are only opened at certain hours. We were in luck, for in a few minutes a train went by, and two men immediately commenced to swing the ponderous bridge with the greatest ease, so nicely is it balanced. I had an amusing conversation with a native here. He looked at our engine, and said in Flemish, "Clean machine." I replied, "Yes, clean machine, and black Fisher," he having been stoking all day. "Dat is nix," was the reply, "clean machine."

The river now became much prettier and wider, with a magnificent row of black poplars on each side, the stems of which were very large and tall. On the right was a fringe of alders, growing in clumps out of the water. Bricks were made in large quantities here. At Wieze the lock was of a different shape, being very large and oval, with stone stairs on each side, a form of construction which allowed a double row of barges to pass together.

At 5.30 we halted again to wait for a train to pass the Railway bridge of Audeghem before it could be opened, and here heard with joy that we were only half a mile from Termonde. We arrived

at the lock there at six o'clock, and landed a gentleman who had asked for a passage from Alost, having steamed thirty-eight miles, and passed eleven locks.

We brought up above for the night, by the side of several barges deeply loaded, which were waiting for a spring tide to get over the shallow water below the lock, to pass through to the Scheldt. We found that it would not be high water before three o'clock, so that we had to wait till the next afternoon before going into the Scheldt, which here is a very large tidal river of great width; but to reach it it was necessary to pass through the town, where the mouth of the River Dendre was much choked up with mud. The lock is very large, with sluices on each side to allow the flood waters to run off. There is a bank just below the lock, and the deep water channel is from the left hand sluice (as one descends), slanting over to the right bank.

We were told that the Railway bridge in the town does not open after six o'clock, but this, no doubt, depends on the time of year, and at all times notice must be given. A pilot that could talk good

English soon came to us, and we arranged to go through as soon as the tide rose sufficiently the next afternoon.

We amused ourselves in the morning in walking about the town, which dates from the ninth century, and tracing the course we had to take by the narrow river that winds through the town to the Scheldt. Very unpromising did it look at low water, the yellowish unctuous mud being quite bare, as were the banks on each side of the large river, the water of which looked very thick.

As a fortification, its chief strength, like many of these towns of Flanders, consists in the ease with which the surrounding country is flooded at will. In 1667 Louis XIV. was compelled to retreat hastily with his numerous army, when he laid siege to the town, in consequence of the besiegers having opened the sluices. During the siege of Antwerp in 1832, the Dutch laid under water, in this way, the entire country surrounding the Tête-de-Flandre, opposite Antwerp. So deep was the water over the fields that twelve gunboats were able to cruise in all directions, thus cutting

off all communication with the city on this side.

To show the damage done when it is necessary to resort to such means of defence, two millions of francs were required merely to restore the embankment, while the salt water and sand converted the once fertile district into a dreary waste, which was not brought again into cultivation for many years.





CHAPTER XVII.

TERMONDE—QUAINT OLD BUILDING—CURIOUS OLD CLOCK—A
NIGHT IN THE CHURCH TOWER—ON THE SCHELDT—BASRONDE
—DANGEROUS PART OF THE RIVER—THE DURME—TILRODE
KIEK—DANGEROUS OBSTRUCTION—RUPELMONDE—STATUE OF
MERCATOR—THE RUPELQUICK PASSAGE.

THAT Termonde, at one corner of the market-place, there is a very old building, now used as a music-school, which according to the inscription on it was built in the twelfth century and restored in the fifteenth. A double flight of steps gives access through a door on the first story. There are many of the quaint old roofs to be seen here, with steps up the gable-ends.

At a shop I saw a curious antique clock, which nothing would induce the owner to part with, as it was so old and kept such perfect time, and had been in his family many generations. It was simply a pendulum three feet long, swinging backwards and forwards, the face and open works being in the lower end. The clock-maker was delighted at my taking notice of it, and invited us to go up the tower of the town-hall, in order to see the old bells forming the carillons or chimes. These had been for three hundred years in the charge of his family, from father to son. We soon ascended to the small chamber near the top, where the rude keys are kept, which, by means of wires ingeniously connected with the clappers, enable the player to ring any tune at will.

The old man told us many curious incidents connected with his duty, that had happened to him in days gone by. One story was that, on a dark and stormy night in Winter, he was up in the small chamber made of the wooden beams that form the top of the tower above the stone work, to which, as now, one has to gain access by

means of a ladder through a small trap-door that is shut down and forms part of the floor of the chamber.

The raging wind caused the old beams to creak and shake, and the dim light cast by the rusty lantern only served to make the place look more weird-like. He was in a dreadful state of fear, afraid to remain where he was, and yet more afraid to descend and face the ridicule that would meet him, had he come down without playing those tunes that he had promised, perchance to amuse his lady love.

He had not long sat down to play, hoping that the sound of the bells would remove the fear that hardly allowed him to strike a note, when he felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned round with chattering teeth, expecting to see he knew not what. There was no one there, and the place was so small that no one could escape notice. Besides this, the trap-door that gave access was closed, and he was absolutely sitting on it, so he knew no one could have entered the place, quite vacant when he ascended to it. Thoughts of the Evil One crossed his mind,

which he resolutely crushed as they arose, and firmly determined to go on playing. Again and again came the tap on his shoulder, moister and moister did he grow from the perspiration which poured in drops from him; his fears increased by the notes from one of the bells which would sound untold, and which spoilt the harmony of his music.

At last he discovered that the note which sounded uncalled for, would not strike when he wished it, and he found that the wire, having in some way become disconnected, in swaying about with the wind had struck him on the back.

Another story was that all at once, in the middle of the chimes that he was playing, one of the large bells suddenly fell, and grazing his arm, tumbled on the floor with a crash, breaking a large beam in its descent, which also fell at his feet. This old man dearly loved his bells, and looked with pride on them and his son, who in time would take the place that he had received from his fathers.

We could not find any fresh butter here,

though Miller inquired at all likely shops; but at last, to our amusement, we discovered that it formed part of the stores kept at the shop of a tobacconist, who received it twice a week from a neighbouring farm. Smokers have reason to rejoice in Belgium, there being little or no duty on the fragrant weed.

Many were the debates we had at this place, whether we should give up Brussels, as it was getting so late in the season, and by turning to the left, instead of the right, ascend to Ghent; but we determined at last to adhere to our plans as before arranged.

At a little after one o'clock, the Captain of the Port made his appearance in uniform, accompanied by the pilot, as he said that he wished to see us safely through the town, the waters of which were under his charge. We passed the lock, here called sluice, with some barges, and under the guidance of the Port Captain, and the pilot, Louis Vesleyen, were soon through the two town and the railway bridges, the toll at the former being forty-two centimes each, while the latter was free.

At 1.45 we were on the broad river, having previously landed the harbour-master. The Scheldt here is about one hundred and fifty yards wide, the rise of tide being ten feet, taking five hours to flow and seven to ebb. High water at fall and change is at six o'clock at Termonde. Pleasant was the feeling in being in deep and broad waters again, and fast did the 'Ytene' respond to the revolutions of her screw, driven rapidly with plenty of steam, so as to save our tide into the tidal lock at Willebroek. We soon passed Vlasenbroek on the right, with its little white church, where it is necessary to keep on the opposite shore, at a moderate distance from the bank.

At 2.30 we reached Basronde, also on the right, which may be known by the large church tower and the ship-building yard, where a schooner, the first sea-going vessel we had seen since we left Rouen, was lying in order to be repaired. There are also large oil-mills, and many small Dutch schuyts were at anchor. The pilot drew our attention to a church called Maria Kirk, which was far inland on the left bank. This, he said, we should pass, leaving it on

the right, so great a bend does the river make.

In ten minutes we passed St. Amand, known by its little houses and high church. Here we noticed a number of gulls flying about, some terns amongst them plunging into the water after small fish. In another ten minutes we were shown on our right the church we had seen inland on our left; and passing an island we arrived at Bornham, opposite to which place is a sandbank called Koning Ridge, on the point of land. This is a dangerous part of the river, where four barges were lost in one year. In descending, as we were, it is necessary to keep gradually going over to a large single tree on the right bank, then to turn in the same way to a clump of large trees just below on the left bank; next to pass along about a hundred yards from left shore, past a red cottage, as far as the point, and finally to go over to the mill on the right bank.

At 3.15 we passed the little River Durme, on which is Tilrode Kirk, with a mill opposite to it. It was now high water, and we had

passed all the worst places in this part of the stream, where the pilot said we could not have gone at low water. The bank on one side was lined with very long sedge and rushes, which men were cutting for thatching purposes. Soon we came to Tamise on the left, looking very bright and gay with its factories and church, which has a domed spire. Just above this town it is necessary to keep on the left side of the river, as the other is occupied by a long sand-bank. Here an old Ostend mail-boat, with two funnels, was at anchor, being worn out in the service; she is now used to sound the channel from Antwerp to Ghent, the Belgian authorities having at last thought of buoying the river. Another large steamer here was used as a passenger boat from Tamise to Antwerp.

A large railway bridge, not more than twelve feet high from the water, greatly obstructs the navigation, being only opened at certain times, and not at all after dusk. The erection of this bridge and the one at Termonde, should hardly have been allowed in their present form, as they lessen the value of the river to those sending goods. The latter bridge

is decidedly dangerous on account of its being at a sharp bend, and as the current runs very fast and right across from one pier to the other. It is an awkward place to pass, so much so that a special pilot for the bridge alone is required, and a strong warp to slack away so as to keep the barges midway between the piers.

Most of the railways belong to the State, which finds it more profitable to receive the freight on these rather than the small tolls on barges, the owners of which often grumbled much to us on this subject. As our masts were down, we soon lowered the funnel, and passed under the iron bridge and over the telegraphic cable that here crosses the river.

The Scheldt is very wide below, and high trees are planted on the right side, in the midst of which is a white house. It is necessary to keep about a hundred yards from shore on this side, as there is a sandbank on the left. The old town of Rupelmonde now opens up right across the line of the river, looking very red with its large church

and high tower on the left side of it. At this part of the river there are white marks showing which side to keep, put up for the use of the 'Tamise' steamer. The white house among the trees turns out to be a summer-house, built in the form of a temple, over the front of which is a large plaque with classical figures on it.

Rupelmonde appears at least a mile and a half long, and is a gigantic town of brick-kilns, where bricks can be bought at ten to twelve francs a thousand, free on board. These however, are small, but larger ones can be procured at fifteen francs; they are piled up in clamps close to the water, ready to be shipped in the vessels that come for them. Looking up the main street, which is at right angles with the river, we could there see the lately erected statue to the memory of Mercator, who was a native of Rupelmonde. He was famous for the charts of the world, drawn on the principle that he invented. At the lower end of the town is a creek, or small river, which forms the harbour. On the side of this creek, opposite to the town, are the ruins of an old castle with a

round tower, that belonged to the feudal lords of this place.

At 3.53 we turned to our right up the Rupel river, which here runs into the Scheldt. This river is formed by the union of the greater and lesser Nethe, the Dyle and the Seune. From here can be obtained a view of Antwerp, some twelve miles further down the river, the spire of its cathedral and many other towers are seen rising in grandeur on the left bank of the Scheidt. Here we met a strong ebb tide, it being past slack water in the great river; but sixty pounds of steam drove the little vessel fast against it. On the bank of the Rupel is the old toll house, where in past times all vessels had to pay dues. It is octagon in shape, and its ornamented roof is supported by light iron pillars.

A tug, with a schooner from Brussels, and many schuyts were coming down with the tide, and we grew afraid lest we should have to anchor outside for the night, and to wait till the next afternoon to get into Willebrock, as the locks are only opened during the day. The Antwerp and Boom steamer now passed us, having just left the

dummy, formed of an old vessel rejoicing in the name "*In de ark van Noe.*"

At Niel, on the left bank, where there are many brickfields, the enterprising English firm of Johnson & Co. make Portland cement, and tiles, which cost here fifteen to twenty francs a thousand. The tall tower and spire of Boom are opposite the Willebrock canal, which is just below the long bridge over the Rupel; and on the Willebrock side of the river is the part which opens for vessels.

We arrived here at 4.25, just two hours and forty minutes from Termonde, a very quick passage, as we had the tide against us all the way, except a short time between Tamise and Rupelmonde, when it was slack, a distance of twenty-six miles. It was delightful to find the lock-gates open and quite ready, so in we went with a schuyt, and obtained a pass, which must be signed at each lock, the toll being taken at Brussels. There are five large locks on this canal, which has from nine to ten feet of water, except at one point where it passes over a small river, and at this place I do not think there are more than eight feet. Between locks 3 and 4 there are two bridges close together,

and two more between 4 and 5, but these all swing.

A train of eight large schuyts had just gone ahead of us, towed by a chain tug-boat, which we could not pass between the locks. The pilot, as nearly as possible, brought us to grief by trying to do so, as the wash from the banks turned our head right into the line of vessels, and we all but got caught between them, as they were rapidly towed along. Had we got nipped, we should have been broken up in a minute. As they slackened close to the lock, we went ahead to the gates; but to our horror, as soon as the tug let go the chain and warps of the schuyts, she shot ahead with nothing to stop her, and all thought mischief would be done; but fenders and energetic poling on the part of the tug averted the danger. Pilots are all very well for sandbanks, &c., but never will I let them have command again when any danger from collision threatens. We passed the lock with the schuyts all packed closely together.

We landed our pilot at lock No. 3, near which is the railway station for Termonde, and paid him twenty francs, just double the sum paid by the

schuyts, which take a long time over the journey, and what we paid when we returned the same way. Louis Vesleyen, however, speaks English, is a good pilot, a civil man, and can be much recommended.

It was a splendid night; the moon shining brightly, the light being reflected from the water in the canal ahead of us. On each side were stately trees, and as there was no traffic we determined to go on as far as we could, and did not pull up till 10.10 at lock No. 5, where we were told that it was against the regulations to open the locks after dark. I understand, however, that the lockman loves sleep, which he cannot obtain if you keep up a constant noise with the steam-whistle; but at last, worn out, down he comes, muttering many exclamations of *donner und blitzen*, and lets you through.





CHAPTER XVIII.

ACTION OF TRADES' UNIONS—APPROACH TO BRUSSELS—COMTE
DE FLANDRE—CONVENIENT STATION—AWKWARD ACCIDENT
—A BARGE SUNK—THE DUTCH SKIPPER—PASSING THE RAIL-
WAY BRIDGE AT TERMONDE—LOADING HAY—SCHELLEBELLE
—GUNPOWDER WORKS—COLLECTING DUES.



EARLY in the morning (October 13th), one of the London steamers, 'The City of Ghent,' that trades direct to Brussels, went through the lock. We heard afterwards that they carry a great quantity of the iron girders, &c., so much used now in the new London buildings. Though they cost more than many of our manufacturers would willingly make them for, the building firms are compelled to

go abroad for them in consequence of the system of trades' unions, which, immediately a large contract is taken in this country, instigate the workmen to strike. In consequence of this danger, no master will engage to deliver the ironwork at a fixed time. As this would much interfere with building operations, a higher price is paid to the foreigner, who is able to fix a time for delivery, and keep it. Trade once lost in this way is hard to recover, and it is lamentable to see those who live, and must live by labour, thus killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

At 9.45 a.m. we left lock No. 5, and passed two very large country seats, with pleasure grounds well laid out. Further on we observed some chemical works, the sulphurous fumes from which have killed the trees on the side of the canal. We then went over the river that is under the canal. The brickwork forming the channel is rather above the general depth of the canal, and deeply laden vessels sometimes find a difficulty in passing it. I mention this, as many yachts of good size may easily go up to Brussels, towed by the tug-boats, and be moored in the basins there.

At 10.20 the churches at Brussels began to show themselves on the left, a large square tower and a spire, up which scaffolding was erected, being very apparent. More chemical and gas works were on the left, and on the right was Laeken, where is the château and park of the King. As we neared the town, we saw the Comte de Flandre taking an early ride, attended by an officer in uniform. He seemed much amused at seeing an English yacht steaming up to Brussels.

Close to the first swing bridge is the junction with the canal from Charleroi. By branching off from the St. Quentin canal at La Fère, and passing by Charleroi, Brussels may be reached from Paris without descending the Scheldt; but the locks from Charleroi to Brussels are only nine feet wide and seventy feet long, while the depth is over five feet. The *Bureau de Navigation*, to which it is necessary to go in order to pay the tolls, and get a permit to return through the canal, is a little way up the Charleroi canal, between it and the docks.

We passed the three swing bridges between the

basins, having to come quite close before they would think of opening them. The traffic is large over these bridges, carriages, omnibuses, and tramway cars passing every minute. It seemed to us quite curious to be near to so many people, all engaged in their everyday business, and who all stopped to see us go by. The first basin is used by the large steamers and vessels which have goods for the more considerable warehouses on the right hand side; the second basin was where barges, &c., laden with firewood, discharged their cargoes, which were piled up in huge stacks on the quays on each side.

Basin No. 3 seemed devoted to barges bringing bricks, tiles and coal; but there was hardly room to stow the two former articles, though carts were removing them all day. The building trade appears to be very thriving in Belgium, the ground that was formerly occupied by the fortifications, which are now levelled to the ground, becoming rapidly covered with tall houses.

We went to the extreme end of the third basin, and moored close to the Church of St. Catherine. This is a most convenient station, being close to

the markets and the General Post Office, and a walk of about ten minutes up the chief streets brings us to the Place Royale. It was a great treat once more having the English newspapers, which arrive every evening at seven o'clock. One night an awkward accident occurred. I was going on shore to walk up for the "Times," when the plank we always carry on these inland voyages to go ashore by, slipped from the quay, on the edge of which it happened to be just balanced, though a few minutes before it was all right. I was half way between the vessel and the wall, and, of course, went down into the water just as if I had fallen into a trap. I need not say it was uncommonly cold, and deep enough to drown one who could not swim, which fortunately I could, and I kept myself afloat until the men held the end of the plank in such a way that I was able to climb on board by it. I mention this incident as a warning how necessary it is to make a gangway fast at each end if possible, but particularly at the end inboard, in order to prevent its slipping from its place.

One day a great excitement was caused by a

fire breaking out in a house close to the quay and warehouses; but it was fortunately soon extinguished, though much alarm was caused. We spent a very pleasant week at Brussels, which is a charming city, in fact quite a little Paris; and we registered our intentions to pay more visits to it by water, the access up the Scheldt from Antwerp, or by canal from Ostend, being so easy.

We took in a little more Mariemont coal at twenty-three shillings a ton, the store being on the quay opposite; and then, being quite ready to start, we left with regret on the 18th October. We met many trains of vessels that were being towed up and down the canal, the rule of which is to keep the west bank going down, and the east bank coming up.

We left the Little Willebroek lock at 4.20 p.m., fortunately finding sufficient water in the Rupel River to do so. For the passage back to Termonde, on our way to Ghent, we had engaged a good pilot, by name A. Roscom, who had been recommended to us by the owner of a barge at Brussels, by whom we were also told

that ten francs was the proper charge, and quite sufficient, as we went so much faster than the barges did. A small vessel, that wanted to save her tide down to the tile works, asked for a tow, which enabled the people in charge to moor at the wharf, and take in cargo for the next morning's tide, instead of losing three parts of a day in idleness.

By 5.8 p.m., we were in the wide Scheldt again, and at 5.30 were whistling for the men to open Tamise Railway Bridge, for our masts being up we could not pass under it as on the voyage down. Those in charge, however, would not do so, it being dusk, so with two anchors down we brought up for the night on the east side of the river, where there is not quite so much stream as on the other side, to which it runs very hard. Fisher picked up here, in some way, an account of a large barge which had struck against the piers of the railway bridge, and sunk a few hundred yards from it; a child who was in the cabin being drowned before it could be reached by its mother, who, with two men, was saved in the boat. This melancholy occur-

rence he, of course, now came aft to retail, ending, as he usually did such dismal tales, by a reflection of which he was very fond, "But we think nothing of that, M'arm!" If we had dragged our anchors in a place where the mud was so soft, it was our opinion that without steam we should soon have to think of how to save ourselves from a similar fate, so I gave Fisher the order to bank the fire and keep steam up all night.

October 19th saw us off again at 6.15, when the bridge was opened, and we soon passed the scene of the incident just narrated, and observed the mast, &c., of the unlucky barge that had been sunk.

A short way up we met our old enemy, the Dutch barge; that had done so much to hinder our progress in the Blaton and Ath Canal. It was evident, from the delay he had met with, that our representations to the chief agent at Ath must have had such an effect that he had been stopped and fined; for he ought to have been at Termonde only two days after us, instead of which it was nearly a

fortnight. The sailor man waved his hand to my men, but the skipper did not show up.

Termonde was reached at 7.30, where we pulled up to change pilots; and one, A. Mertens, came off and asked ten francs to take us to Ghent. Our friend, the Captain of the Port, asked us for a passage, which we were delighted to grant, and he proved a most pleasant passenger, giving much information of the places, &c., passed *en route*.

The railway bridge at Termonde is very difficult to pass, and it is considered so dangerous that there is a special pilot for the barges. We, however, did without him, though our new pilot was very nervous about it; the tide on the flood setting across to the piles on the left side as you ascend the river.

The river is prettily wooded along the banks above Termonde, but the appearance of the trees, which are fast losing their leaves, together with the sharp and cold weather, tell that Winter is drawing nigh. Zeledyke on the right, and Appels on the left, are now passed. Just

above the latter is a high sandy bank, on the same side as the village, opposite to which is another sandbank, so that it is necessary to keep near the high shore. We were told that many barges take the ground at this place.

At 8.30 the pretty village of Schoonhard, with its swing railway bridge, is left behind. Then comes Wicheleu on the left, with a high bank of sand, and opposite are fine level grass fields. An unlucky barge had been sunk here, and the owners were now camping out in the fields in a kind of tent formed by their boat and a sail. A little further on the right is Uitbergen, where there is a château, a pretty little spired church in the fields, and an old windmill with ten sails, forming quite a picture. It was amusing to see men loading hay into a barge on exactly the same principle as if they were building a stack. There were so many pitchers, and so many men taking the hay from them, while others packed it so as to keep it in form; and thus it is built up to a considerable height in the vessel. There is a chain here right across for the ferry-boat, and it was necessary to blow our whistle to give them notice to lower

it to the bottom of the river. Schellebelle is another small village with red-roofed houses, and a church, the spire of which is covered with slate. A loaded barge was all ready to go down with the ebb tide, for which it would not have long to wait, as the flood was nearly down; and though there would be no more current running up with us, yet the water would rise another half-yard. A small river that has five feet of water at high tide runs up to Kalcken, which is half a mile from the Scheldt.

We had now opposite us the large red church of Wetteren, with its tower, on which is a tall centre spire, with four smaller ones at each angle. There are very large gunpowder works here, where much of the powder, two inches in the grain, used by our large cannons is made; barges full often leaving to be shipped to England and other nations which patronise this factory. Russia was having so much powder made, during the Summer and Autumn, that five of their officials were at the works to superintend the making of it; no less than twenty large barges having been lately dispatched for this nation, perhaps to be used

during this Summer in Servia and Herzegovina, or perchance directly against the poor Sultan of Turkey, now so sick that every means, direct or indirect, of still further weakening his power, will be sure to be taken advantage of.

At the point on the right, where are two white posts, there is a bank of sand. Before coming to this point we cross over, and when off it come over again, and go close to the upper side of it. The river bends so much here that the churches and houses which appear at one moment on the left, are almost immediately after seen on the right, the serpentine windings forming a double S, the turnings of which are very sharp.

The changes of view were indeed very puzzling, but eventually we reached Wetteren, which proved to be on the left bank of the river. The large château of William IV. was now occupied by M. Cromphout, the director of the powder-works. We noticed large stacks of the wood to be made into charcoal of the right kind to be mixed with sulphur and saltpetre.

As we passed the wharf where the powder is shipped, we saw, all ready for the barges, a sufficient number of barrels of powder to blow all Wetteren into atoms, and we could not help feeling safer when this locality was left far behind us. At the swing bridge here a wooden shoe was, as usual, swung to us by means of a rod and line, and our pilot told us that fifty-five centimes was the correct sum to put into it.

At 9.45 we passed on the left Quaterecht, a place famous for its tanneries, so large that it is difficult to imagine how skins enough can be got together to keep them in constant work. There is also a convent here, the poor nuns of which seemed very amused at seeing us steam rapidly by. A small factory where blue for washing is produced, was also pointed out to us. The profit derived from the manufacture of this article is very great, cent per cent being netted. The China clay, one of the chief ingredients used in its production, comes from Cornwall, and we remember seeing it shipped at Fowey in great quantities two months past. It is also said that it is largely used in France and Belgium to adulterate the flour employed

in making bread. Here we saw five men towing a large schuyt that was coming down with her mainsail so boomed out that it nearly took up all the river.

When approaching Melle, it is necessary to be cautious in rounding the sharp bend of the stream, as you come on a swing-bridge just past the corner. Melle seems a thriving place, with many new houses, and a large school, which has the names of nearly four hundred boys on the books. Pipes are made here in large quantities, and the good clay is also made into bricks, there being very many yards all along the river.

Hausden bridge was the last one to be met before reaching Ghent, the Beffroi of which town we saw at 10.20. As we approached the town, we observed on the left one or two streams of water which must not be entered; the river on the right hand must be steadily kept until the large lock, called *la nouvelle écluse*, is reached, a lock with large iron gates and a brick bridge in front of it.

There is always great trouble in going through this lock, which is a tidal one, only opened towards

high water, at which time there is a great number of vessels waiting to go into the town. The men managing these are not nearly so polished and polite as the French bargemen. No steamer or yacht is respected, but each pushes ahead for himself, and many times I feared that the peace would be broken, as they thought nothing of raising their set poles to strike at one of my men, when we objected to our being crushed between their strong craft.

When I was here in 1869 in the 'Cicada,' I arranged with the lockman to let me in alone, and to shut the gates quickly; at which there was a most excited scene, and a cry that they were all sold by the Englishman. In order to baffle us, one of them ran into the town and bribed the men at the bridges not to open them for us—an arrangement which was actually carried out; but to their astonishment and disgust we soon struck our masts and lowered our funnel, and quietly steamed under some twenty-five or thirty bridges through the heart of the town.

If this plan of getting the lockman to pass a yacht through alone can be managed, it should

always be done, as there is great risk of damage in this lock when it is filled so full of vessels; and, besides, an hour or two is saved, as there is great delay in getting so many barges in and out through the lock-gates. If this cannot be managed, as was now the case with us, care should be taken to get in front, as then you are first out, and away before the canal above is blocked by these slow moving craft.

Close to this part of the town are large engineering works, where any repairs, &c., can be done. The owner of these works has a small steam-yacht, of which there are several in Ghent. Monsieur I. d'Honot, Captain of the port of Termonde, here left us, being very pleased with his run up the river. We owed a debt of gratitude to him for the fund of information he imparted to us, in describing the many little villages and places on the banks of the river. Our pilot, too, bade us farewell; he can be well recommended as one of the best on the river.

The canal inside the lock is lined with trees, behind which, on the other side of the foot-path, are houses. We did not go, as we did in the 'Cicada,'

right through the town, where the water of the canals is so black and filthy, but we took the first turning sharp round to the right. Passing bridge No. 1, we paid twenty centimes, bridge No. 2, nothing, then taking the canal to the left, where is bridge No. 3, we paid twenty centimes again. This led us straight into the docks (*Entrepôt*), where are timber-stores and warehouses ; while at the other end were large, square rigged, sea-going vessels, and two English steamers unloading coals. We also saw moored here a steam-yacht of one hundred and fifty tons belonging to Baron Rothschild, which draws eight feet nine inches of water. These vessels come up the Scheldt to Terneuzen, where is a canal, eighteen feet deep direct to Ghent, by means of which it has all the advantage of a seaport ; but the wily Dutchmen, to whom the part of the canal nearest the Scheldt belongs, put so high tolls on shipping, that they cripple the trade of their neighbours.

At the end of this basin, you pass through bridge No. 4, and pay twenty more centimes. On the right is the lock into the Terneuzen canal ; bridges No. 5 and 6 are passed, then turn to the right and pass bridge No. 7, and you find yourself in the canal

called the New Canal, though it was made as long ago as 1775, in order to unite the River Lys with the large canal that goes to Bruges. By following these instructions carefully, it will be unnecessary to engage a man to show the way, or to go through the twenty-seven bridges and narrow waters met with in the towns.

We made fast just below a factory on the left bank, it being most out of the way of the traffic. Here the water in the canal is extremely good, and very different from what it is in the town, and we found it a most convenient station; for from the Sas Port, which is close by, there is a tramway right into the heart of the city, on which cars run every ten minutes for the modest fare of two pence.





CHAPTER XIX.

GHENT—THE BEFFROI — CHURCHES OF ST. BAVON AND ST. NICOLAS—ARCHIVES OF EAST FLANDERS—CURIOUS LEGAL DOCUMENT—CRYPT OF THE OLD PALACE—BRUGES—FINE VIEW—CANAL BETWEEN BRUGES AND GHENT—HOSPICE OF ST. JOHN—LOWER PART OF THE TOWN—THE PORT OF BRUGES.



GHENT, the capital of Eastern Flanders, once surpassed Paris in size, whence the boast of Charles V. "that he could put all Paris in his *Gant*," or *Glove*. It is built on twenty-six islands, formed by many canals, which are crossed by over two hundred bridges; this, with the old and quaint Spanish houses, tends to make it one of the oldest-looking and most curious towns that one can come across.

The Beffroi, which is near the Cathedral, erected

in 1183, is a most remarkable building, being ten feet wider at the top than at the base, and is surmounted by a huge dragon of copper gilt, which was originally brought from Constantinople, having been taken from the Church of St. Sophia, by Baldwin IX., in 1204. The largest bell weighs eleven thousand pounds, and bears the following inscription :

“ Mynen naem is Roelant ; als ick clippe dan is brandt ;
Als ick ludy, dan is storm in Vlaenderlandt.”

We spent the rest of the day, and the next, in wandering about and seeing all we could, though the weather was very cold and wet. St Bavon is by far the most gorgeous of all the churches, the pictures of the old masters being very fine, and the pulpit of oak and marble by Laurence Delvaux, considered the finest in the world.

We were shown a fine monument of a former bishop of the Damant family, which still exists in England. The verger said that some of the family had visited it, and took much interest in this memorial. Many of this family were Echevins or magistrates at Ghent from 1300 to 1600 A.D. We also saw three or four brass candle-

sticks of enormous size, that belonged to the chapel at Whitehall in the time of Charles I., and which still bear the arms of England ; these were sold in the time of Oliver Cromwell. The fine carved marble fronts and doors of the chapel are very remarkable.

St. Nicolas is the oldest church in Ghent, having been built in 1040. The architecture is very interesting. For some way up there are round arches, but as time elapsed in the construction of the building the fashion altered, and higher up the arches became more pointed. It is lamentable to see the way in which houses and shops have been built up against the lower part of the outside of this old church. There are more old houses in Ghent than in any town we have yet visited.

The view of the square and canal from near St. Michael's is very curious and interesting, the quaint Spanish houses with gables rising in steps being very numerous. The old fishmarket we also visited, with its wooded slabs for fish quite hollowed with the use of ages. The view of St. Nicolas from here is very fine. We were sorry to see the old stone gateway with bas-reliefs of Neptune

&c., in the process of being levelled to the ground.

We visited the state archives of the province of East Flanders, and were most kindly received by Monsieur F. H. d'Hoop, who gave me some information I wanted, and showed us all over his vast collection of books and manuscripts, including a most important book of reference compiled by himself. This is a most important depot of documents, for by a late law all the Communes are obliged to send in their old manuscripts, papers, seals, &c., to be collected, preserved, and indexed. The first lots were received on the 2nd April 1875, and many are yet to be sent in, but mayors and burgomasters are most loath to part with the archives their predecessors have had charge of for centuries, and in some cases the law to compel them to do so will have to be put in force against them.

It was most interesting to see the old deed boxes of black oak, with curiously wrought iron clasps and locks. One deed that has turned up was a *rente* granted by the town of Ghent to one of my family in the year 1605. We went

through room after room, full of manuscripts piled in high wooden racks, and tied in bundles, with the name of the commune outside. When all these papers have been sent in to the chief town in each province of Belgium, and are properly indexed, there will be a mass of fresh information on the history of the Netherlands to be explored and digested that has been hitherto quite inaccessible, having been scattered in little villages all over the country, and genealogists will be able to clear up knotty points or questions of descent that have hitherto defied their researches.

We were shown a most curious legal conveyance of the year 745, perhaps one of the oldest preserved. It is written in Latin, and nothing can be more crabbed than the handwriting, of which it is almost impossible to make out a word, until its peculiar character is mastered. M. d'Hoop very kindly gave me an exact lithographic copy of this interesting document. We were amused by his asking us about "*les deux plus ravissants petits chiens*," everyone knowing about us and our travels in the 'Ytene,' from the many newspaper articles that had appeared, some of which were most

amusing. The crypt of the old Palace, where the archives are kept, is interesting, the ground floor being supported by very pointed arches of about the year 1100.

Six o'clock on the 21st October—a fine morning, though dark—saw us under weigh again. When passing the railway swing bridge, we inquired for the Navigation Office, in order to get a permit for Ostend. This we found close to the next bridge, where the so-called new canal, just one hundred years old, joins the great canal to Bruges. We found the canal very wide and pretty deep, with a fine row of trees on each side of it. The sun rose at 6.45, gilding all the trees ahead with its early rays, and looking back, one saw the old town of Ghent enveloped in a mist, above which the summits of the Beffroi, and of the towers of St. Bavon, St. Nicolas, and St. Michael, &c., were seen clearly against the sky.

At the next bridge, three miles further on, where, as at the preceding one, we had to pay a toll of twenty-five centimes, is a small lock on the right side with a large barge-building yard. This seems to be a favourite spot for country-houses, there

being several large ones here, with gardens laid out in the English style; the railings in front of one of them being richly gilt. At 7.45 we came to another canal, which crosses the Bruges canal on the same level, a navigation office being placed at the junction. This canal goes from Deynze, on the River Lys, between Courtrai and Ghent, and runs to Heyst on the sea-coast between Blankenberghe and the mouth of the Scheldt.

Half an hour more brought us to the village of Hausbeke, with its red windmill. Numbers of work-people were coming out of a large factory, the breakfast hour being the same here as in England. At 8.45 we steamed by a small town, and just after going through the bridge, we met one of those means of conveyance, now almost gone out of fashion, called a *trekschuyt*. This boat, which was long and of good beam, was nicely fitted with windows fore and aft, and with a raised deck that gave good head room. A horse was drawing it quickly along, and a man at the helm blew a trumpet as he went by us, a salutation which we returned with a whistle. A quantity of luggage, &c., was piled up on the top of the cabins, and

country girls, in the costume of the province, were looking at us through the windows.

We here inquired how far it was to Bruges, but the answer "*Dry uren*" left us in the difficulty of guessing whether it was an ideal three hours of steaming or walking. Half an hour later there is a great bend in the canal, and the banks are high and sandy; it had been of double width here, but a dyke had for some reason or other been made, which divided the canal into two. We tried the depth with our awning pole, but Fisher let it slip out of his hand, and we had to lower the boat to pick it up. The depth was eight feet.

At ten o'clock we came to a river which ran on the left under a stone bridge of two arches, called Moerbrugge, and twenty minutes later the towers of Bruges were in sight on the left. At 10.40 we were admiring the first part of the town, where the little river Rege runs under the low bridge in the ramparts, which still extend round this part of the town close to the water's edge. An old round brick tower, and some fine trees, with the tall church towers behind, all tended to make this

view the prettiest we had seen for a long time.

We brought up by some trees above the first bridge across the canal, close to one of the promenades of the town; but we afterwards found out that the place where the steam-yachts, which often come from Ghent, generally moor, is between the two bridges by the Public Gardens. The canal widens out in a large and deep pool here, and forms a capital station, the water being very clear, and apparently full of large fish, which kept rising to the surface.

This canal between Ghent and Bruges, the finest we have yet been on, is thirty-five miles long, and has only one lock, which is at Bruges, and not many bridges, all swinging. The depth, which is from seven to nine feet, renders it easy to keep up a steady pace, but care must always be taken not to make much wash, which is very properly against the regulations, the violation of which might lead to much trouble, accompanied with a prohibition to proceed further.

Bruges is a remarkably clean nice town, with good streets and shops. The River Rege runs swiftly under the bridges at a lower level than

the canal, in which there is a fall of from four to five feet, managed by means of the *Ecluse de la Coupure*. The lofty *Beffroi*, and the gigantic towers of the Cathedral and of *Notre Dame*, are all built of brick, and considering the material, the interiors are good, but are remarkable chiefly for the pictures, statues, &c., that they contain. The Hospice of St. John is rich in several wonderful pictures by Hans Memling; among which is the famous one of St. Ursula and the Ten Thousand Virgins, painted on the sides of an oblong box or coffer, and very properly kept under a glass case. The pictures of this institution were not carried off to Paris in the time of Napoleon, as were those from the churches of Belgium, which, however, afterwards recovered a great many that were thus for a time lost.

This Hospice has room for two hundred and fifty sick, but only sixty beds were occupied when we visited it, a fact which spoke well for the health of the town. Twenty-eight Sisters of Charity, most comfortable-looking matronly persons, devote themselves to the task of nursing the patients, and they have servants to do the cooking,

cleaning, &c. We inspected the kitchens, which were very clean and business-like.

There is an old gate of the town at the lower bridge over the canal, called the *Porte de Gand*, a fine old structure with two round towers, between which is the gateway in the form of a pointed arch. In the museum belonging to a society are collected together many curious mediæval relics, among which are two iron safes of the thirteenth century, let into recesses in the wall with double iron doors of very curious construction. In the cathedral is preserved the cross, in ivory, of St. Machutis, who was the Bishop of Bruges in 560; but it was formerly preserved in the Church of St. Donatus, that was destroyed in the Revolution. In the Church of Notre Dame are the magnificent tombs of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and his daughter Mary, covered with the armorial bearings and titles of the Netherlands, which this unscrupulous house became possessed of by marriage, robbery, and fraud. In this church are some very fine specimens of deeply hammered brass work, one in particular, about three feet square, representing the Descent from the Cross, with the name of *Wolfganck* as the artist.

Bruges, after the thirteenth century, was esteemed with Venice the first commercial city of Europe, and provided the Northern States with Italian merchandise, forming as it did the centre of communication between the Lombard and Hanseatic towns. As early as the seventh century it acquired the rank of a city, and in 1270 was considerably increased. At the corner of the street of St. Amand are the remains of two old houses, one of which was the residence of Charles V., and the other of Charles II. of England.

The next day, 22nd October, was as fine as in Summer, and we were *en route* again a little after one o'clock, as the lock just below was only opened at nine and two o'clock, though no doubt the silver key would unlock the gates at any time.

After passing by the Porte de Gand, there are two or three bridges, and then comes the Porte de St. Croix, an old structure much like the former. We next observed, on the old ramparts, a row of five windmills. The lock, which is of a round shape, is very large, the four end gates being each eight yards long; it also has a pair of gates leading to the canal, eleven miles long, which goes to Sluys in Holland, but as there are only sluices, and

no lock there, vessels cannot gain access to and from the Scheldt. There is sixteen feet of water in this canal, on which runs a trekschuyt, the fare by which was elevenpence first, and seven pence halfpenny second class. At the lock, I noticed there is a double set of gates at the lower end to guard against the danger of the floods should the sea-dykes at any time be broken. The process of passing through was very slow, the lock being so large and several vessels going through together with us. We therefore spent the time in visiting the lower part of the town, and spending all the money in our pockets in buying the black silk lace which is the special industry of the women and girls of Bruges, a town with a large population of very poor people. We did not get clear of the lock till 4.40., and as an experiment took one of the large Flemish barges, deeply laden, in tow, through the wide water below, which forms the Port of Bruges, where were lying the English ship 'Fowey,' and other sea-going vessels, which are enabled to come here by means of the fine and deep canal from Ostend, one hundred and fifty feet wide, and sixteen feet deep.



CHAPTER XX.

VILLAGE OF NIEWWAY—OSTEND—THE CANAL FROM BRUGES TO
OSTEND—HALLIDAY OF EAST COWES—CANAL ROUTE FROM
OSTEND TO CALAIS—NIEUPORT—A NEGLECTED CANAL—IN A
DILEMMA—FURNESS—CHURCH OF ST. WILLEBROD—ANNOY-
ING STOPPAGE—ANGLO-FRENCH ALLIANCE—NEGLECT OF ITS
CANALS BY BELGIUM.



THE country after leaving Bruges is flatter than ever, with wide-lying tracts of grazing ground, in which there are many ditches and drains to carry off the surface water. Had a gun been handy, a fine shot might have been had at a covey of twelve partridges that here flew over the canal just above our vessel. There is a small village on the dyke close to the canal, which goes by the name

of Niewway. Although there are a few farm-houses scattered here and there, villages are few in number, and you steam long distances without seeing any buildings.

At 5.10 we passed Stathille bridge, where the canal turns to the right and here met a large trekschuyt. Twenty minutes later is the bridge over another canal joining on the left side and the village of Plasschendale; by this canal you take the route for Dunkerque and Calais. A railway bridge then crosses the canal, and pursuing our way we arrive at another bridge over another canal on the left, about two miles from Ostend. It was necessary to leave the main canal and proceed by this route, as the bridge near the large sluices and lock at Ostend, in the chief canal, is under repair and will not be ready to open for traffic for some time.

It was now dark, and though we kept the steam-whistle well at work, we could not get anyone to make his appearance to open the bridge, which, as a rule, is not opened when one hour after sunset is past. I ran the vessel along shore, and jumping out, soon induced the bridgeman to let

us through. As it was so dark, great care, with a good look-out a-head, was necessary, as a lock generally unused and open left but a narrow channel.

In a very short time we arrived at the lock-gates which lead to the salt water of the port of Ostend just below them, and we were soon moored behind a row of barges. A broad bank or dyke on our right divided us from the main canal and its large sluices into the harbour, and just below these was the English mail-boat with her two large white funnels.

The town of Ostend is situated between the left bank of the canal in which we were and the sea. It was curious to notice all the way from Bruges to Ostend, a distance of thirteen miles and a half, that the water in the canal is higher than the land on the right side, but the land on the left side is rather higher, drier, and better cultivated.

We now seemed to have left behind us the network of canals and navigable rivers that we had passed through, and it was very refreshing on walking through the town to come to the enor-

mous dyke and to see and hear the waves of the sea rolling in on the sands. Saturday and Sunday we took as a holiday, A—— not being able to determine to go direct to England by the mail-boat, and to leave me to make my way in the yacht to Dover and the Wight; but having made inquiries, we found that the 'Ytene,' unlike the native vessels, being in possession of a keel, would go through the soft mud in the canals, and could, with care, steam by way of Dunkerque through the canals parallel to the sea to Calais. This course it was after much talk arranged to take, though the weather was very fine, with a slight breeze blowing off shore.

I was glad to meet here a yachting friend, who had with him a little vessel built by Halliday of East Cowes, one of the best and most clever builders of small craft up to fifty tons, his vessels always proving very fast and weatherly. He will always carry out any designs that owners have a particular fancy for, but at the same time he contrives to produce a handsome vessel that no one need feel ashamed of owning. The Harbour-Master at Ostend we found to be an exceedingly

pleasant man, well understanding the yachting fancies of Englishmen, and disposed to promote in all ways their interest and pleasure when visiting Ostend.

I was glad to explore the canals between Ostend and Calais, of which the depth was uncertain according to reports received, but which, from many inquiries of the owners of vessels frequenting them, I believed to have sufficient water for vessels drawing four feet eight inches; but I was yet very loath to turn my back on the salt water.

We started again on Monday, 25th October, and retraced our steps to Slykens, where we got a permit from Mademoiselle Lucas, whose office is near the large locks on the main canal, and then, turning to the right through the bridge at Plasschendale, we were soon in the lock of the canal to Niepfort. When the French frontier is reached, it is necessary to get another permit for the French canals. There are many swing bridges on this route at each of which it is customary to pay ten centimes. At 9.40 we passed a small canal running in on the left, at 10.20 the

village of Leffingen, and at 11.20 we arrived at Nieuport, where is another tidal lock into the salt water. This cannot be passed after half tide and it is necessary to go through a second tidal lock into the canal on the other side of the small harbour which is very nearly sanded up. The tolls for the two locks and bridge came to forty-six centimes, being thirteen for each lock, and twenty for the bridge; but of course for loaded vessels the rates are much higher.

We then steamed round the ramparts of the old town, the town itself seemingly being sunk below the level of the canal inside the tall earthworks, which defend it equally from enemies by land and from the water which surrounds it on all sides. We passed by a very old and square tower to the east of the town, and brought up near the railway in order to pay a visit to Nieuport which is celebrated for the gallant fight of Prince Maurice of Nassau with the Spaniards in the year 1600, many English volunteers of good family taking part with the former.

We found the town an exceedingly dull and quiet one, and the Halles the only building that bore an

appearance of antiquity. Attached to these was the usual Beffroi without which the citizens in olden times would never have been contented. Passing by a shop, I spied within it a nice pair of old Lowestoft jugs, but had to leave them there without even making a bid for them, as the door was locked, and I heard from a house close by that the man who kept it was in the country, and would not return till the next day, when we should be miles away. We soon returned to the 'Ytene' and were en route again. We found five feet of water in the centre of the canal, but on each side it is very shallow, and except in the middle where the traffic tears away the weeds, becomes more so year by year, because the vegetation that grows on the banks and sides is never removed, and no attention of any kind is given to the canal.

As we went further on there was only four feet eight inches, just our draught, and the weeds were so numerous that our fan became continually choked by cutting them off and twisting them up into a large ball, thus quite destroying our propelling power. Again and again did we

shake them off by one or two vigorous turns astern and sometimes with the aid of the boat-hooks; but it was all of no avail, and the annoyance became so great that I had to order Allen ashore with a towline, by means of which we dragged the yacht slowly through the soft mud at the bottom of the canal. At last we stuck fast, and I feared that it would be necessary to lighten the vessel, and even then we might not be able to go on; it was impossible to turn her, and so to go back and we should be sure to get into trouble for blocking up the canal. In these circumstances I conceived the idea of putting our boat across the bows as far forward as possible, and also shifting our spare anchor and cable from aft to forward, thus raising our stern where we drew most water; and by continually shaking off the weeds from our fan we managed to get on and arrived at Furnes at 4.30.

At the railway bridge, we had to wait a little to allow the train from Ostend to pass, before it could be opened. Two more bridges were gone through, and at five o'clock we came to another bridge which was being rebuilt. Large beams of timber were

thrown across the piers, and the iron beams were just in process of being extended from one side of the canal to the other. Our masts had to come down, and the gear had to be removed from the bottom of the funnel, so that it, too, might be lowered on deck; for so low were the beams of wood, that it seemed doubtful whether we could pass under them.

As careful measurement as we could take showed very nearly the exact height of the obstacles we had to pass, but it was difficult to measure to a nicety; and, on steaming slowly ahead, it was discovered that one beam was too low by half an inch to allow us to go beneath it. The beam was one foot square and very heavy, but I requested the foreman of the works to allow two or three of his strongest men to come on board, and with their assistance, and all our own available strength, we applied our shoulders to the beam, and, either lifting it or depressing the vessel, probably a little of both, we squeezed through, and then brought up on the other side for the night. The regular bridge-man then came up, whining for ten centimes, but I soon told him I wanted five francs for being obliged to take my

masts down, a claim which raised from the assembled crowd of people a hearty laugh at his expense.

As soon as we were all safe, I went up into the town of Furnes, to have a look at it, as we had arranged to be off as early as possible the next morning. It was formerly situated on the coast, but by lapse of ages the sea has receded so much that it is now three or four miles distant, the space being occupied with dunes of white sand. The abbey church of St. Willebrod, or Walburge, is renowned for its antiquity, having been founded in the year 870, but the greater part of the structure is of the eleventh century.

The design of the building is unique and curious. Twelve round columns, about thirty feet high, are arranged in an oval in the centre, at one end of which is the altar, with old carved oak stalls all round. Outside these columns are others, with arches springing from all of them, thus joining the twelve centre columns. Some of these were round, and some painted. The gabled roof was of a very high pitch, looking exceedingly quaint and old-fashioned, with its very small spire.

Within the church were life-sized coloured figures of our Saviour, the Virgin, and the Apostles, enclosed in wire cages. I was so struck with the architecture of the church, that I remained in it until obliged to leave, when it was about to be locked up for the night. The square or market-place was also very old-looking, with the enormous square tower of the church of St. Nicolas rising up on one side of it.

The canal runs nearly round Furnes, forming a moat to the old ramparts, the angles of which are bricked. The houses of the town are small and low, being no higher than the ramparts. Nearly all have steps rising up the gables.

On returning to the yacht, the journal had to be written up, and the route made out for the morrow, it being always advisable to know the distances, locks, &c., beforehand. We left Furnes the next morning, October 26th, at 6.10, but in half an hour an annoying stoppage occurred at Edinkirke, on account of a temporary bridge, which had been put up as a substitute while the old one was being rebuilt. This work, though a month or six weeks would have been ample time for it, had

been on hand since the beginning of June, and would apparently take many months longer. The wooden substitute was so low, that every time a vessel passed, the top of it had to be quite removed, and, as they said it had been open the day before, no inducement would make the man in charge open it until one o'clock.

I immediately went to find the burgomaster, who was an old farmer. After a long hunt, I found him seated by his turf fire, and, though he was unable to speak anything but the broadest Flemish, I managed to make him understand what I wanted, but could not get anything from him but unsatisfactory grunts, until a more intelligent person arrived, who could speak French, and at last he agreed to accompany me, and endeavour to induce the man at the bridge to open it, but only on the condition, if any carts or other vehicles were passing, we would compensate them for waiting. Nothing, however, could induce the man in charge to alter his mind, and he now said that at two o'clock his men should take it to pieces for us; so, thanking his worship, I left him, and had breakfast.

We then went and had a walk on the sand dunes, but could not get a view of the sea, it being some way off. When we were about a mile and a half from the canal, I heard our whistle blowing, the wind being in such a direction that the sound reached us ; and, on hurrying back, we found that an alliance had been formed between the English and French against the Belgians. A large French barge had arrived, coming in the opposite direction to ours, and understanding the tactics of this place, its crew at once commenced to pull the bridge to pieces, getting our men to help them, and in ten minutes the task was accomplished, and the canal open for traffic. They told us that the practice in this place was to levy black mail, and to refuse to open the bridge until a round sum had been paid, an exaction which they considered a disgrace to the Belgian Authorities to allow. It was evident that they had good grounds for saying this, as the bridge-man, who had come up in the meantime, was as quiet as possible, and had quite caved in, as the Americans would have said. Of course, he wanted his penny, but I am afraid he got nothing but abuse from us. It was very

annoying to have got steam up at such an early hour, and to be stopped in such a way, the more so as the work was under the charge of the foreman at Furnes, where we had trouble with the bridge, and he had told us nothing of the works at Edinkerke.

We got through at 11.15, and in an hour arrived at the frontier line between Belgium and France. A French soldier was keeping guard before the bureau of the authorities, and we drew up alongside a barge lying there for our papers to be examined. We very nearly had another delay here, for we were informed that the office would not be open till two o'clock. However, I sent my card in at once to the *chef*, and when I informed him that my yacht—one of a class of vessels of which he appeared quite ignorant—was not a trading vessel, and that we were free from the usual charges, he gradually became very polite in his manner, and at last consented to let us pass, but would insist on coming on board, as he said it was his duty. He just looked in at the cabin and then we were allowed to enter France, after obtaining a *laissez passez* for the canal. This

canal was conceded by a law of 1828 to a Monsieur Lardé ; and as it has not been redeemed by the State, like most of the other concessions, we had to pay fifty-five centimes instead of the usual charge of ten centimes for a stamp.

As soon as we started again, we found the canal properly cleaned out, free from weeds, and of ample depth. The Belgian authorities have often been requested by the French Government to keep their canal to Ostend in a proper state, and though there is a dredging-machine near the frontier, and a show of work is done there, the remainder of the canal, between Nieuport and France, is in a very bad state, showing that there is a great neglect of duty shown by the officials, almost suggesting the idea that it must be the policy of Belgium to discourage the use of its ancient water ways, and to throw all traffic possible on the railways. If this is its policy, it is a very narrow-minded one, for the commerce of the country must suffer, in consequence of this extra charge levied on the transport of goods, that by water being in these countries by far the cheaper of the two. Many were

the grumbles I heard from those connected with the navigation of the canals.

It was a splendid day, the wind being in the east and rather cold. In the early morning the heavy dew of the night before was frozen hard on the top of the cabin, but as the sun rose this soon melted; the barometer registered 30.4. We heard afterwards that at this time there was constant rain and bad weather at home.





CHAPTER XXI.

DUNKERQUE—ECLUSE OCTAGONALE—FRENCH AND BELGIAN
BARGEMEN—COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY OF FRANCE—PLACE JEAN
BAET—WALK ON THE PIER—THE PORT—DIFFICULTIES OF
CANAL NAVIGATION—THE RIVER AA—CANAL DE CALAIS—
PONT DE QUATRE BRANCHES—CALAIS REVIVALIST SER-
VICES.

AT one o'clock we passed through the Lock of Zuydcoote, which is now unused and the lock gates rotten. When it was in use it gave an additional depth to the Belgian part of the canal, but it is of no service now, in consequence of the neglect of the Belgian authorities in keeping their part of it in a proper state.

In another half-hour we saw the tower of

Dunkerque Church over the top of the dyke. Here we found fixed bridges twelve feet high from the water, but we passed easily under them by lowering the funnel, making good way.

At 2.30 we arrived at the Ecluse Octagonale at Dunkerque, which is one of the oddest shaped locks we have yet met with, having seen some of all sorts. It is square in shape, with gates at each angle, and is sufficiently large to take in vessels one hundred and ten feet long. Gate No. 1, twenty feet wide, gives access to the canal of Furnes; No. 2, twenty-seven feet wide, to Bourbourg and Bergues; No. 3, seventeen feet wide, to the Canal of Moëres; and No. 4, to the Harbour of Dunkerque. The distance from Plasschendaele to Dunkerque is thirty-five miles, and very long miles they are, on account of the shallow water in the canal. The tide did not allow us to proceed till eight o'clock in the evening, as it is necessary to pass through the tidal river below the lock, and then to enter the canal leading to Calais by means of the Ecluse Jeu-du-Mail.

I fortunately met the *éclusier* in the town, and he told me that we must go through to-night if

we wanted to get on, as the water from the Canal de Bergues would be drawn off in order that a railway bridge might be repaired, and unless we did so, we should be detained in the Canal de Furnes for fourteen days. We walked round to see the canal, and found it full of vessels and barges, many of which would lie aground when the water was run off, as they were empty and had no freight. One of the bargemen I talked to was most kind and polite, and insisted on showing me the way to the Navigation Office, which is in a street about two hundred yards from the Octagonal lock, straight along the canal below, and in the third or fourth street on the left. The *laissez passer* was soon obtained, and we were all in order to resume our journey. Very different were the manners of the French bargemen from those in the Low Countries we had just left. The police regulations in the rivers and canals in France are strictly observed; but if there are any at all in Belgium, they certainly seem to be in abeyance, except in the canals let to companies.

Trade, too, was more active here, as the harbour was as full as it could be of all classes of

sea-going vessels, sailing as well as steamers, and it really looked like one of the busiest parts of the Thames. It is extraordinary that, after so severe a trial as that gone through by France, commerce should be so active; but in all parts that we had visited it seemed to be the same. There is no grumbling, no useless regrets for past disasters, but a sternly settled determination to recover their position, and then to regain the prestige that for a time they have lost.

In the Place, called after the semi-freebooter, Jean Bart, who in the seventeenth century was the terror of our coast, there is a statue erected to his memory. He is represented in the sea costume of the period, brandishing a sword in his right hand in the direction of England, and in his left a pistol. This town after hard fighting was taken by English troops, under Oliver Cromwell, from the Spaniards; and though Charles II. has been much blamed for it, it certainly was the most wise and prudent act of his reign to sell it to Louis XIV. for six millions of livres.

We much enjoyed the walk on the pier, which is no less than five-eighths of a mile long to the

platform at the end, which is furnished with seats. The south pier is only half a mile long. The depth of water in the Channel between the piers is no less than twenty feet at high water, and fifteen feet at low. This depth, in combination with the accommodation afforded by the floating basins, causes Dunkerque to be ranked as the fourth port in France. By a law passed in 1861, an enlargement of the accommodation was provided for at an estimated expense of fifteen millions of francs, but these works are not yet completed.

The price of meat was higher here than in Belgium, and in the other parts of France where we had been. Mutton was over a shilling a pound, and beef not much cheaper; but the butchers' shops seemed cleaner and more tastefully arranged than in the country we had just left.

At eight o'clock we descended through the lock into the tidal water below, with our lights all burning brightly. We much needed them, for there was so much movement among the barges that did not wish to be left aground. It was also

a very dark night, and we were often very puzzled to know which canal to take, as we could only see a very short distance round us.

On asking the right way of one of the crew of a barge, the same man that had shown me the way to the Bureau de Navigation kindly offered to come on board to assist us, and we were soon at the entrance of the lock called Jeu de Mail, leading to the Canal de Bourbourg above, where we should be all right, having passed the part of the canal that would have the water drawn off.

Just below us, under a brick bridge, was an enormous barge so wide and so deeply-laden that it could hardly be squeezed through the lock gates. I sent two of our men to help them, but it was some time before she moved an inch. At last when she was quite straight between the gates, I gently moved a-head, and when our bowsprit touched her stern, I gave more steam and pushed her into the lock, which proceeding greatly delighted the bargemen as well as ourselves, as it saved us all much trouble.

When the lock was full and the upper gates open, we found the canal above completely blocked with scores of barges packed in rows. I therefore suggested to the lock-keeper that we and the large barge should remain in the lock all night, and that he should give orders to clear a way for us in the early morning. We had had a long day, and all slept soundly. I set the alarum to wake the men up at a little after five o'clock, as we wanted to get to Calais in good time before dark.

October 27th.—I was out by six o'clock and found it raining hard, but it left off in half-an-hour and we steamed out of the lock, passing under a low arch in the walls of the fortifications which go right over the canal. There was great trouble in passing the barges, but by whistling and rapping at their sides we soon brought out the owners, and, one by one, we got through them. Three towing one behind the other gave us much trouble, but on my pretending to be very angry and ordering them to stop, as it was against the rules to hinder a steamer, they gave way and the canal was all clear a-head. It does not do to be meek and

mild if you want to get on when a canal is crowded with vessels. The water guage registered just five feet, but it was really deeper, and we went ahead easily, passing with good speed several barges all laden with sugar-beet, piled high up above the gunwale.

At nine o'clock we passed the swing bridge at Copenaxfort, where the port was much crowded, and in half-an-hour we were in the lock of Bourbourg, which is a very long one with sloping sides. The rise here is four feet, and we were soon through. The lockman asked us to take on a portmanteau to the next lock at Guindal, two and a half miles further on. Finding this lock open, we steamed right through on to the river Aa, up which we turned to the left; by descending it, Gravelines would have been reached after a sail of four miles and three-quarters.

The Aa is a small but deep river, having a minimum depth of seven feet, which enabled us to go much faster. We soon met a treckschuyt running between Gravelines and St. Omer; and a mile and a half up the river we passed the small

hamlet of St. Nicolas, on the right bank, with its little church and small farms.

At 12.15 we came to the Canal de Calais, joining the Aa, on the right side, at a place called Weest, which is five miles from Guindal. The entrance to this canal is just opposite a long black camp-shed on the left bank of the Aa, and a post told us that we were only eighteen miles from Calais.

At one o'clock we came to the lock of Henuin, and at three passed under the remarkable bridge called *Le Pont de Quatre Branches, ou Sans-Pareil*. It is placed at a spot where four canals and four roads meet, and the one bridge serves all these at once. It is beautifully constructed of stone, and has a spherical vault pierced with lunettes or arches, which give a passage to the roads above and canals beneath, proceeding in the four different directions. An inscription on the Calais side states that it was built in 1752. The canal on the left goes to Ardres, on the right to Guines, behind us to Weest, and ahead to Calais.

Noticing that the 'Ytene' was steaming very regularly at the rate of five miles an hour, according to the distance posts on the bank of the canal, I

took the opportunity of making some calculations as to the amount of the slip of the screw when steaming in such confined waters. By experience, I had discovered that it is useless and unwise to attempt to force a vessel beyond a certain speed, necessarily a low one, when the width of the canal is narrow, and only a foot of water (a little more or less) under the screw, the centrifugal power of which naturally drives the water with great force against the solid earth; and were great power to be given out by the engines, the rebound of the hinder part of the vessel at each revolution would greatly tend to a straining action, which in time would cause damage.

When steaming ahead, the following effects could readily be seen in the consequent displacement of the water of the canal, which was, as nearly as possible, forty-five feet wide. Ahead of the vessel the water rises, being pushed back by the advance of the vessel; at her bows it commences to lower in an even decline to the stern. This is easily seen by the water covering vegetation previously noticed ahead, and which is left higher amidships than it was when seen some moments before. This causes,

besides the resistance of the body of water pushed ahead, the same effect as a current against the vessel from her bows to her quarters. At the same time, the water under the vessel is compressed by her form against the bottom of the canal, with the result of dragging the water behind the vessel almost bodily with her, to meet the current on each side between the vessel and banks of the canal. This causes the wave, generally called the swell, which proceeds at an angle from the stern to each bank, and travels very little slower than the vessel itself, as shown by the sticks, wood, &c., which are seen on the crest of the swell going rapidly past the bank.

A hundred and thirty-two revolutions with a screw of five and a-half feet pitch, gives 8.25 miles an hour, and as we were going only five miles an hour, the slip was just sixty per cent. It would be difficult to say how much of this was due to skin friction—at least half, if not more; this being accounted for by the extra resistance of the water in a narrow channel, which would increase or decrease according to the bulk of the vessel in proportion to the dimensions of the canal. It was most instructive

to notice how the vessel would rapidly increase her speed and shoot ahead, without any alteration of the engines or change of power, when there was an increase in the width of the canal, as at one of the ports in which barges lie.

Two of the trees on the side of the canal showed the effects of a severe thunderstorm, the bark being regularly scored out two inches wide from top to bottom.

At 4.10 Calais was distinguished by its high church spire. It appeared quite close, but it is necessary to wind round the town, past all the ramparts on the north side, some of which are lined with brick and others with white stone, the turnings round the angles being very sharp. At last, it seemed as if we had passed a *cul-de-sac*, the walls of the fortifications being built right across the canal, with a high earthwork on the right and a wall on the left. A low arch, however, was in the centre of the wall before us, and past this appeared the gates of the *Ecluse du Crucifix*, which leads into the tidal harbour of Calais, close to the entrance of the large floating basin.

We steamed into the lock, but were soon told that we could not go through till the next morning, as it would not be high tide till nine o'clock. Besides, we were informed, it would be useless for us to pass, as the gates of the floating basin are not opened at night, and there was no water to speak of in the outer harbour at low tide.

It was arranged, therefore, that we were to lie in the lock all night. Verily, it was a Lock du Crucifix to us, as overhead was the railway bridge quite shutting us in, as if in a vault, and we were informed that some of the water in the canal would be let out, as usual, at low tide, to scour the channel of the port, but that as soon as the vessel grounded we could wake up the lockman, who would then close the sluices. Not at all a pleasant prospect for a quiet night, and had I foreseen that we should have to remain at Calais some days, I should have steamed back to St. Pierre, a mile or two behind us, and waited quietly there until the weather had settled down sufficiently to enable us to cross to Dover.

Two months in narrow canals certainly tend to demoralise one in the face of bad weather at

sea. In the lock there is no current when the sluices are open, but if it is necessary to lie in the canal, care must be taken to moor in the centre of it; and this must be done securely as the water running out causes a strong current.

At one o'clock orders came from the Captain of the Port to open the sluices, and a watch was set on board to take careful notice that the water did not fall too low. Miller was much put out by a venturesome rat, that somehow or other got on board and ran up his body as he was sitting down, perchance thinking of his wife and children, then fast asleep in their cottage on Pennington Common. By and by he reported to me that the water had been lowered to six feet, and I sent him up to wake the lockman, who came down and closed the sluices, when we all got into our berths and were soon fast asleep.

At nine o'clock we were let out of our watery prison about an hour and a half before high water. In getting out it is necessary to notice if there is sufficient height under the bridge at the outlet of the lock, as it is very low, and at high water there is very little room. If it is intended by those

going to visit the inland waters of France to take to the canals here, it is well to enter Calais with a rising tide and to go straight into the lock as soon as it is open, the masts, &c., being lowered all ready to pass under the low bridge.

As soon as we were in the outer harbour, I went to the harbour-master and asked to be taken into the floating basin, but he said that there was no room, as so many vessels had come in. He was very much inclined to persist in this, but the second in command was a jovial, pleasant man, though he too declined to admit me, saying that some vessels might have to anchor outside in consequence of the many ships requiring admission.

I thought the best way was to look out for a berth for myself, and soon found one inside close to the entrance gates, next to an English schooner that was loading potatoes. I then returned to the cheery harbour-master, and told him that I would lie outside and ground every tide, but that he must be responsible for any damage to the vessel, as of course it was out of the question anchoring right outside the

harbour. My *ruse* took at once, for who ever heard of a French official taking any responsibility? He said at once he would find room for the yacht, and I pointed out to him the berth I wished for, and we were soon made fast to the schooner. Our only risk now was that of being squeezed, should a strong wind spring up and press a vessel on to us when coming into the dock; but this danger was a very remote one and could only happen through neglect, and besides the gates were only open once a day at high water.

Trade was as thriving here as at Dunkerque. An immense number of Baltic vessels were unloading timber, which was being put into barges and made into rafts, to go by the canal, much of it being for Paris.

In the evening I went to the town to get newspapers, and seeing the people pouring into the Cathedral, I went in too, and found that a series of revivalist services was being held every night. The prayers offered up by the priests were simple and short, and after them all the vast congregation, which quite filled the large church, sang

hymns, copies of which were distributed, printed on slips of paper. The effect of so many voices was very grand. The event of the evening was a sermon by a celebrated preacher, who gave out as his subject "*La Confession*." His argument was, that a practice which had prevailed in all ages, and in all countries, and which still continued to be regarded as a sacred duty, must necessarily be a divine ordinance; and that where the custom was not observed, the divine displeasure was manifested by the wrath which was poured out on the Church, as in Germany and in England, "the church of the latter country being now in ruins."

The next evening we went again, when the subject of the sermon was "*La Mort*;" death certain, death sudden, death decisive. "Look at a child," said the preacher, "will he live? perhaps. Will he grow old? perhaps. Will he be a clever man? perhaps. Will he be rich? perhaps. Will he die? certain." As he said the last word, he made the church resound with his voice. He wound up his sermon by asserting that the sure means of dying in peace with their Maker was by attending to the duty of "*La Confession*."

We teach in our English Church, and in our idea we teach rightly and soundly, that confession is not to be made lightly on all occasions and at all times to men subject to the same frailties as we are, but that it should be made continually to our *His Son* Maker, who gave his son to be a propitiation for our sins, and through whom alone we are saved.





CHAPTER XXI.

THE WEATHER—DEPARTURE FROM CALAIS—IN DOVER HARBOUR—EFFECT ON THE BOILER OF THE CHANGE FROM FRESH TO SALT WATER—IMPRISONED IN DOCK—A CUTTER-YACHT IN A BREEZE—DUNGENESS—LIGHT-HOUSE AND BEACON—ROUGH WEATHER IN THE CHANNEL—MACKEREL NETS—CONCLUSION OF OUR VOYAGE.

THE weather was very unsettled, the wind blowing freshly from the south-east. The mail-boats brought reports of a high sea in the Channel, and the sermon on death, "certain and sudden," though very striking, was at the least not cheering.

There was no change till the 30th, when the weather seemed finer; so we got up steam and

arranging for A—— to cross by the 1.30 mail-boat, I went out of the dock as soon as the gates were open at 10.30, and at 10.45, was steaming past the pier heads of Calais. As the tide was running strong to the eastward, it was necessary to keep well to the westward, which much increased the distance we had to run. As we got away from the French coast, there was plenty of sea that had been rolled up for some days across the tide, but all on board enjoyed the light and pleasant motion of the Channel, with its ample elbow room, which was very striking after the close and crowded canals we had been on for two months.

We had quite got to mid-channel before we sighted Dover Castle, and glad were we to see England again. When we steamed into the harbour at Dover, we learned that we were just too late to go into the floating dock, but we found a berth alongside a wall where we could ground in soft mud.

At eleven o'clock at night we were able to go into the inner harbour; the shelter of which was desirable as it had come on to blow again, and we might have to wait some time before the weather

was fit to go down Channel to the Isle of Wight. Yachtsmen will invariably notice that after they have been for some time in the French canals, the boiler is sure to prime badly when they come to the sea again, as the salt water dissolves the carbonates that have collected in a crust on the tubes and inside of the boiler, there being a large percentage of carbonates in the fresh water in France. These boil up in the water, and show in the glass white as milk. In the Dutch and Belgian inland waters there is not so much fear of this troublesome deposit.

We had been lying in the Granville Dock three or four days, and were weary of our continual watching of the persistent southerly wind that would shift only a point or two to the east, or as many to the west, the glass rising and falling a tenth or two, all the time threatening to send us a wind that would blow in the way only too familiar in the Channel at this fitful period of the year. Though snug and safe in dock, we felt we were imprisoned more or less, and were well aware that should the wind come from the northward, and the time for going into the outer harbour be allowed to

slip by, we should have to wait for another tide, and this at a time of the year when there are not many hours of daylight.

One night our steam had been got up, and all made snug on deck and below, when the men from the Calais mail-boat that had just come in, reported a strong wind to the westward of south, and a heavy sea outside ; information which made me hesitate as to the propriety of turning out at the early hour of 1.30 a.m., especially as we should have to wait outside under the Admiralty pier till daybreak for the ebb tide. I soon made my mind up, and at once ordered the fire to be drawn, much to the disgust of Fisher, who pronounced it to be the most beautiful night that ever was, while Miller made a remark which half caused me to repent the order I had given.

Next morning, however, we fell in with some of the crew of a cutter yacht, nearly our size, who told us that they had got down as far as Dungeness, when they had to give in and turn back for shelter ; as at midnight, when it was as dark as pitch, a strong wind came out of a black bank of cloud, and they were compelled to take in their canvas, in

the best way possible, in a hurried scramble, while the little vessel was driving through the foaming waves which were every moment increasing in volume.

"Not far wrong," was my remark to Miller, "we at all events have had a good night, and didn't make fools of ourselves by tumbling about for hours."

On Wednesday night the alarum was set again for one o'clock a.m., in order to have a look at the weather, and to light up if there was a chance, as we desired to go out of dock after the 'Castalia' at 2.30. The tug-boat that had been out reporting that there was not much wind, but a long sea, we lit up, and at 2.30 I heard steam at the whistle, but as all remained quiet, I called out to Fisher who had dozed off again. He soon pushed the fire back, and by the time the big twin had got through the gates, we were almost ready to start, gaining a minute or two by not casting off our warps until after the hail of the harbour-master's men for us to go out, "if we were going." It was as dark as Erebus when we passed out between the red lights of the piers, as we were compelled to do,

the two or three mail-boats that were going in and out preventing us from taking advantage of the shelter of the tidal port for another hour or so. We took advantage, however, of the slender shelter of the Admiralty Pier, and letting go our anchor between two pilot boats, we turned in, leaving Allen on deck as watch, with orders to report any change of weather. The two little dogs crept into my arms for warmth, but we did not enjoy much comfort, as we rolled about and surged to one chain, though plenty of it was paid out.

About 5.30, Fisher came into the engine room, and in a cheery voice, said,

“Finest morning ever seen, Sir ; wind off shore.”

“All right,” said I, “we will be off at six o’clock,” and I turned round for a half hour’s sleep, which was worth all the rest I had had that night.

By 6.20 we had got our anchor on board, and with thirty pounds of steam, we laid our course for the Ness. It was a beautiful morning, with a fine long sea, and the wind off shore, though scud was

flying along aloft from the westward, the glass keeping steady at 30.1. Some land-birds, too, obeying the instinct that induces them to migrate at certain seasons, were making their way across to France, thus showing that they, too, had a preference for a fine day.

In two hours we were rounding the point of Dungeness, where we could see a woman and child taking a walk on the beach, while one of the lighthouse men was picking up some waif or stray that the waves had washed up on this lonely strand. The lighthouse and beacon, with the large fog-horn, on which the newly-risen sun was shining, showed sharp and clear against the sky. We congratulated ourselves on our luck, which we really deserved for going out of dock at such an unearthly hour, but the tide, like the wind, waits for no man.

At 9.40 Winchelsea, embosomed in trees, bore north, and Hastings soon appeared; but Beachy Head was invisible, and a band of white cloud with a rising wind to the southward of west, showed that we might have some trouble in getting round, and, perhaps, should have to turn tail and run back,

for the sea was very heavy, in consequence of the southerly winds that had been blowing for a fortnight, and which the tides could not subdue, as the direction of the breeze was right across them.

I got a bearing off Bexhill, and as our course of west half-south would just bring us outside the 'Royal Sovereign' buoy, I ordered a good look-out for Beachy Head and the buoy.

The weather soon began to be very dirty, a misty rain, driven by a strong south-west wind, obscured everything, and the sea, already more violent than agreeable, began to break; but the brave little vessel threw them off her bows, plunging into them now and then, till at last she got one on board enough to wash a mat through the scuppers. Things looked very unpleasant, to say the least of it, when Allen sang out,

"There is the lightship, broad on the port-bow."

"Lightship," said I, "what lightship?" for having been abroad, I did not know that the Royal Sovereign light had been recently placed there, though I was well aware that it was much

needed by the crowd of shipping going up and down the Channel, but by referring to the list of lights, I soon saw that it had been proposed to place a lightship there.

Ten minutes later we passed the buoy on the bank, so close that with the aid of the glass I could read off the name, so that our course for the Ness had been very straight. I now knew exactly where I was, and began to feel more happy for with the thick mist it was by no means pleasant to think of ploughing our way, perhaps miles too far down the Channel, with such a sea that no one would give us the credit of going through it in so small a vessel. We set our patent log, so as to know how far we should the weather continue to be thick and foggy when we had passed Beachy Head, and made no venture to change our course in order to go to Newhaven; for it was no use battling our way against such a sea to the Isle of Wight, more so as the atmosphere was so thick.

Twenty minutes later a break in the mist showed us the dim outline of the Head, and though the sea got worse off it, and we had to go at a slow steady pace, all went well. Very pleased I

to see the mist and clouds blown away, showing the white cliffs of the bold headland shining in the sun that broke through them. As we got off the highest part the seas became shorter, and now and then we had to ease the steam-handle so as to get the vessel dry over them.

As soon as we were abreast of the lighthouse we gradually edged ourselves inshore, for we had kept two miles off in order to avoid the race, which I had once before got into to my great discomfort. We could now let the vessel go faster, without fear of having her decks washed in a head sea, and at 3.20 we steamed into the quiet water of Newhaven; berthing ourselves alongside one of the sets of piles, as we knew we should take the mud at low water.

The night was exceeding clear, and the moon was shining brightly, but the next morning, when we were ready to go out again, it was very cold, with a dense white fog; but as we thought that the sun would soon melt it away, we started at 6.10. We very nearly ran over some mackerel nets, which are a great nuisance at night time, as they are apt to get wound round the screw,

should the fisherman not set light to a flare-up, to warn steamers off them. When we had gone a little way, I set the patent log again at 6.35 and it was necessary to go slowly, for fear of running down any of the fishing boats that are often off this part of the coast

We saw nothing however till ten o'clock (the fog being so thick), when I sighted what I took to be Bognor, and at 10.5 saw the Shelly buoy bearing N. by E.; at 10.30 I hauled in the log which registered twenty-seven miles and a quarter. The fog now blew away, and at 11.40 we passed the Pullar buoy, and found the tide running very strongly against us as we went through the Looe. The wind had by this time risen, and in a few minutes it was blowing very hard, and we considered ourselves lucky to be so far on our way. We reached Ryde a little after one o'clock, and brought up to go ashore to telegraph our arrival, and to wait until the tide changed in our favour. At three o'clock we were off again.

Steaming with the tide and against the violent wind, which, however, we cared nothing for now

being inside the shelter of the Wight, I drove the 'Ytene' very fast through the short seas caused by the weather tide, and at 4.45 we were all right at our moorings off Lymington pier, having steamed just one thousand one hundred and fifteen miles since we left them on the 1st of September, without the slightest accident to our little vessel, or any derangement in our engine-room during this long voyage.





APPENDIX.





A P P E N D I X.

IT being very difficult to obtain the official books giving the kilometric distances from place to place, and those showing the route and junctions of the canals with their locks, &c., I am induced to add the necessary information on the route described in this book, hoping it may prove useful to those that may be induced to follow in my footsteps.

THE SEINE.

HAVRE TO PARIS.

	Kilometres.	Metres.	Accumulated distances. Kilometres.
Havre to Quillebœuf.	34	200	
Quillebœuf to Ville- quier	19	200	53,400
Villequier to La Mail- leraye	10	300	63,700
La Mailleraye to Du- clair	25	200	88,900
Duclair to La Bouille.	18	700	107,600
La Bouille to Rouen.	18	100	125,700

	Kilometres.	
Amfreville	5	5
Port-Saint-Ouen	6	11
Oissel	2	13
Bédasne	5	18
Orival	4	22
Elbœuf Lock	2	24
Pont de l'Arche	11	35
Embouchure de l'Eure	2	37

				Kilometres.	
Ecluse de Poses	...	...	...	4	41
Tournedos	...	...	...	4	45
Andé	...	...	...	7	52
Muids	...	...	...	8	60
Le Petit-Andelys	...	...	...	9	69
Vézillon	...	...	...	2	71
Ecluse de la Garenne	...	...	...	11	82
Le Goulet	...	...	...	4	86
Vernon	...	...	...	7	93
Port Villez	...	...	...	5	98
Jeuffosse	...	...	...	3	101
Bonnières	...	...	...	3	104
Freneuse	...	...	...	2	106
La Roche Guyon	...	...	...	4	110
Méricourt	...	...	...	11	121
Rolleboise	...	...	...	3	124
Rosny	...	...	...	2	126
Mantes	...	...	...	8	134
Montalet	...	...	...	7	141
Juziers	...	...	...	4	145
Meulan Lock	...	...	...	5	150
Vaux	...	...	...	3	153
Triel	...	...	...	5	158

	Kilometres.	
Médan	2	160
Poissy	5	165
Les Carrières	2	167
Ecluse de Denouval	1	168
Embouchure de l'Oise (for Belgium, or Rhine and Marne Canal)	4	172
Conflans	2	174
La Frette	7	181
La Borde	6	187
Le Pecq (coaling station) ...	4	191
Port Marly	2	193
Ecluse de Bougival	2	195
Croissy	2	197
Chatou	2	199
Bezous	6	205
Argenteuil	3	208
Epinay	3	211
La Briche	4	215
Gare de St. Ouen	3	218
Asnières Lock	3	221
Neuilly	3	224
Suresnes Lock	3	227

				Kilometres.
Saint Cloud	...	...	...	3 230
Sèvres	...	...	...	2 232
Fortifications	...	...	...	3 235
Paris (Pont de la Concorde)	...			6 241

Havre to Paris 366.7 kilometres.

Paris to River Oise 69 kilometres.

Neuville (River Oise canalisée).				4	
Vauréal	...	...	...	2	6
Cergy	...	...	...	3	9
Erangy	...	...	...	3	12
Pontoise Lock		...	...	3	15
Anvers	...	...	...	7	22
Stors	...	...	...	3	25
L'Isle-Adam Lock		...	...	3	28
Champagne	...	...	...	3	31
Beaumont	...	...	...	4	35
Noisy	...	...	...	4	39
Boran Lock	...	...	...	5	44
Précy	...	...	...	4	48
St. Leu-d'Esserent	...	...	...	5	53

				Kilometres.	
Saint Maximin	...	...	2	55	
Creil Lock	...	...	5	60	
Verneuil	...	...	3	63	
Brenouille	...	...	4	67	
Pont-Sainte-Maxence	...	...	4	71	
Sarron Lock	...	...	2	73	
Verberie Lock	...	...	10	83	
Rivecourt	...	...	4	87	
Croix St. Ouen	...	...	2	89	
Jaux	...	...	4	93	
Venette Lock	...	...	3	96	
Compiègne	...	...	2	98	
Embouchure de l'Aisne (route for					
Marne and Rhine canal)	...	...	3	101	
Clairoux	...	...	1	102	
Jauville Lock (junction with					
Canal latéral to the Oise)	...	...	3	105	
Longueil (Canal latéral de l'Oise)			1	1	
Thourotte	...	...	1	2	
Montmacq	...	...	1	3	
Béthancourt Lock	...	...	2	5	
Ribécourt	...	...	1	6	
Pimprez	...	...	3	9	

	Kilometres.	
Ourscamp	3	12
Pont de Chiry	1	13
Pont de l'Evêque Lock ...	3	16
Bassin du Pierrot	1	17
Bassin de la Rue d'Orroire ...	2	19
Varennas	2	21
Bassin de Béhéricourt ...	1	22
Babœuf	1	23
Apilly Lock	3	26
Quierzy	1	27
Manicamp (junction with Canal de Manicamp)	2	29
<hr/>		
Abbecourt (Canal de Manicamp).	2	
St. Hubert Lock		
Chaurry (junction with Canal de St. Quentin)	3	5
Viry (Canal St. Quentin Lock).	3	3
Port de Coudren	3	6
Port de Tergniers Lock ...	1	7
Embranchement de la Fère for Charleroi	1	8
Farniers Lock	1	9

				Kilometres.	
Quessy Lock	...	...	...	1	10
Voyauz Lock	...	...	...	2	12
Menessy Lock	...	...	...	1	13
Ecluse de Jussy Lock	...	...	...	3	16
Jussy	...	...	...	3	19
Port de St. Simon	...	...	...	5	24
Junction with Canal de la Somme	...	...	...	1	25
Tigny Lock	...	...	...	2	27
Artemps	...	...	...	1	28
Seraucourt Lock	...	...	...	3	31
Fontaine-les-Clercs	...	...	...	3	34
Dallon	...	...	...	2	36
Œstres	...	...	...	2	38
Rocourt	...	...	...	1	39
Port de St. Quentin	...	...	...	2	21
Rouvroy	...	...	...	3	44
Omissy	...	...	...	2	46
Tronquay Tunnel	...	...	...
Lesdins	...	...	...	2	48
Bellenglise	...	...	...	7	55
Riqueval Tunnel	...	...	...	3	58
Macquincourt	...	...	...	6	64
Vendhuile	...	...	...	1	65

	Kilometres.	
Ossu	2	67
Honnecourt	3	70
Banteux et Bantouzelles ...	3	73
La Genouillère	1	74
Crèvecœur	5	79
Masnières	3	82
Marcoing	3	85
Noyelles	3	88
Cambrai (junction with Scheldt).	5	93
Selles Lock (River Scheldt canalised)	2	0
Aire	2	4
Thun l'Evêque	4	8
Iwuy	2	10
Etrun (Canal de la Sensée) ...	2	12
Pont Malin Lock	3	15
Port de Buchin	1	16
Neuville Lock	4	20
Port de l'Ourche	1	21
Port de Denain Lock	2	23
Haulchin Lock	4	27
Trith Lock	3	30
Valenciennes Lock, Notre-Dame.	5	35

				Kilometres.	
Port d'Auzin	...	...	...	1	36
Folien Lock	...	...	...	1	37
De la Folie Lock	...	...	...	4	41
Fresnes	...	...	...	4	45
Condé (junction with Canal de Mons Lock)	...	...	...	3	48
Thivencelle Lock (Canal de Mons)	...	...	...	3	
Frontier	...	...	...	2	5
Pommerœul Lock (junction with Canal d'Antoi- Herbières Lock.					
St. Gilan Lock.					
Gemappe Lock.					
Mons	...	...	...	19	24
Mons					
Pommerœul (Canal d'Antoing).				19	15
Blaton (junction with Canal Bla- ton to Ath)	...	...	...	6	6
Lock No. 10 (Canal Blaton to Ath)	...	...	...	4	

				Kilometres.	
Lock No. 11	...	...	...	6	10
Ath Lock No. 21 (junction with Dendre)	...	...	...	12	22
Lessines, 3 Locks, River Dendre canalisée	...	...	...	11.500	33.500
Grammont, 3 Locks	...	...	...	9	42.500
Ninove, 2 Locks	...	...	...	15.500	58.000
Alost, 3 Locks	...	...	...	15.500	73.500
Termonde, 1 Lock (junction with Scheldt)	...	...	...	13	87.000
<hr/>					
Rupelmonde (junction with Rupel)	...	...	...	30	
Willebroek (Little) Lock (junction with Willebroek Canal).				12	42
Willebroek (Great) Lock (junction with Willebroek Canal).					
Tisselt Lock.					
Humbeck Lock.					
Dry Fontain Lock.					
Brussels	...	...	...	29	29
<hr/>					
Willebroek (Little) Rupel	...			29	29

				Kilometres.	
Rupelmonde	(junction	with			
Scheldt)	...	...	...	12	12
<hr/>					
Termonde (River Scheldt)	...			30	
Ghent (Canal de Bruges Lock).				50	80
<hr/>					
Bruges (Canal d'Ostende)	...			57	57
Ostende	...	...	...	22	22
<hr/>					
Plasschendaële Lock	(junction				
with Canal de Nieuport)	...			9	
Nieuport	...	...	...	21	30
Furnes.					
Dunkirk	{ Lock Octagonal. Lock Jeu de Mail. Canal de Bourbourg. }			32	62
Guindal Lock	(junction with Aa)			21	83
Weest Lock	(junction with Ca-				
lais Canal)	...	...	...	7	90
Calais, Lock du Crucifix	...			30	120
<hr/>					

RECAPITULATION.

	Locks.	Kilometres.
Havre to Paris, River Seine. .	8	367
Paris to Conflans, River Seine. .	3	67
Conflans to Janville, River Oise canalisée	7	105
Janville to Manicamp, Canal laté- ral to Oise	4	29
Manicamp to Chauny, Canal de Manicamp.	1	5
Chauny to Cambrai, Canal St. Quentin	35	93
Cambrai to Condé, River Scheldt.	13	48
Condé to Mons, Canal.	6	25
Mons to Pommerœuil, Canal.	5	20
Pommerœuil to Blaton, Canal An- toing.	5	6
Blaton to Ath, Canal Blaton and Ath.	21	22
Ath to Termonde, Dendre cana- lisée.	12	65
Termonde to Rupelmonde, River Scheldt.		30

	Locks.	Kilometres.
Rupelmonde to Willebroek, River		
Rupel.		12
Willebroek to Brussels, Willebroek		
Canal.	5	29
Brussels to Willebroek, Willebroek		
Canal.	5	29
Willebroek to Rupelmonde, River		
Rupel.		12
Rupelmonde to Ghent, River		
Scheldt		80
Ghent to Bruges, Bruges Canal.	1	57
Bruges to Ostend, Canal. . . .	1	22
Ostend to Plasschendaele, Canal.	1	9
Plasschendaele to Nieuport, Canal.	2	21
Nieuport to Dunkirk, Canal. . .	2	32
Dunkirk to Guindal, Bourbourg		
Canal.	3	21
Guindal to Weest, River Aa. . .	1	7
Weest to Calais, Canal de Calais.	2	30
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	143	1243

	Or,	780 miles.
Lymington to Southampton.	}	147 "
Southampton to Havre.		
Calais to Dover.	}	188 "
Dover to Lymington.		
		<hr/>
		1,115 miles.

Coals burnt	.	.	.	15 tons.
Oil used	.	.	.	13 $\frac{1}{2}$ gallons.

PILOTS AND PILOTAGE.

	Francs.
Pilot N——, Havre to Villequier.	20
„ Rousillen, Rouen to Paris .	100
„ Godon, Paris to Conflans .	12
„ Esselin, Conflans to Com-	
piègne	35
„ Vesleyen, Termonde to Wille-	
broek.	20
„ Roscom, Willebroek to Ter-	
monde.	10
„ A. Mertens, Termonde to	
Ghent.	10
<hr/> 207=£8 6s.	

CANAL DUES.

	fr.	c.
Rouen to Paris . . .		10
Paris to Belgium, frontier . .		10
Belgian frontier to Mons . .		25
Mons to Blaton . . .		25
Blaton to Termonde . .	3	67
Willebroek to Brussels and back .	3	40
Ghent to Ostend . .		25
Ostend to French frontier .		25
Canal conceded to Sieur Lardé .		55
French frontier to Calais . .		10
Calais floating harbour . .	3	0
Dover floating harbour . .	3	50
	<hr/>	
	15	42=12s.
	<hr/>	

THE END.

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